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THE

EARLY ENGLISH CHURCH,

Founded in truth; by blood of martyrdom
Cemented: by the hands of wisdom reared.
WORDSWORTH.

BY

EDWARD CHURTON, M.A.,

ARCHDEACON OF CLEVELAND, AND RECTOR OF CRAYKE, DURHAM.

A New Edition.

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THE REV. HENRY HANDLEY NORRIS, M.A

PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S AND LLANDAFF, AND

RECTOR OF SOUTH HACKNEY,

THE FRIEND WHO ENCOURAGED HIS FIRST STUDIES

IN THE PURSUIT OF DIVINE TRUTH;

THE AUTHOR

GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

INSCRIBES THIS VOLUME,

WITH THE EARNEST PRAYER THAT IT BE FOUND MARKED

BY A CHRISTIAN SINCERITY NOT UNWORTHY

OF HIS OWN.

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PREFACE.

THE aim of the writer of the following pages has been, by searching the earliest records of English history, to lay before the English reader a faithful picture of the life and manners of his Christian forefathers. To write the Church-history of England, as it is too often written, as if the religion of former days had been nothing but superstition on the one side, and imposture on the other; as if there had been nothing pure or holy from the time of Pope Gregory to the Reformation,—this would have

been a much easier task. But inasmuch as tru religion is never lost, though it is sometime dimly seen, the providence of God being en gaged to preserve it in all ages, it is surely rather the duty of the Christian to inquire and mark how that Providence has from time to time raised up faithful witnesses, whose lives and doctrine have shone forth even in dark times, and whose deeds of mercy have tempered with good the evil that is in the world. The eye of the worldling or infidel is quick to mark defects; but it is a more grateful and profitable exercise to discern and trace a character guided by the love of virtue and praise. It has, therefore, been the aim of the writer, while he has not disguised the errors or crimes of former ages, to dwell more gladly on the bright days in the calendar, on the lives and acts of good and peaceable men, who founded churches or religious houses; established schools, and colleges, and hospitals; softened the rudeness of the people's manners, improved their laws; and who, while they enlarged the bounds of the Church, and taught the knowledge of the true faith, were also the teachers of useful arts, and promoters of industry and happiness in society.

Many as are the popular Church-histories of our country, there is yet none which seems to have been written with this aim,—to shew how

from time to time Christianity gained ground among our Saxon, Danish, or Norman forefathers; to point out the changes it wrought in governors and people, and how its own condition was improved or made worse by the changes in the sovereignty of the realm. For this it is necessary to look much into the records of old times, and to dwell not so much on days of trouble and public conflict, as on times of quietness, when the arts of peace had more room to shew themselves. And it seems the duty of a writer of Church-history to relate many things which belong to private and domestic life, from which examples of character and manners may be drawn; leaving to general history the records of more public events, good or bad, and touching on wars and conquests, victories or defeats, only so far as the state of the Church or the character of some eminent Christian is concerned in them.

And this plan is recommended to us by the pattern of Scripture. The historical books of the Old Testament, which, being the history of God's ancient Church, should be the pattern for a Christian historian to follow, are as much a record of private as of public life. Even of those more eminent persons, whose office it was to be rulers, or teachers, or reformers of the ancient Church, of Moses and David, of Elijah

and Elisha, we see almost as much in more private scenes, as in those public acts, by which they guided the people in the way of truth, or restored the altars of God. Besides which, some portions appear to have been more especially written to furnish a view of the state of society in peaceful times, when religion had some hold upon the daily conduct of men. When we read in different parts of the book of Judges, that the land had rest forty years, or fourscore years;[1] or what is said of those two judges, who presided over the tribes of Israel successively for the space of fifty years,[2] without any war or public disorder recorded; we are led to suppose that at such times the fear of God so far prevailed as to preserve the land in peace, and that no scourge of war or other judgment was then needed to alarm the slothful or destroy the guilty. And the pleasing book of Ruth, which immediately follows, the time of which is laid during the government of the judges, seems intended to represent the peaceful order of society and domestic life, which might be found at such a time.

There is another common fault in writers who treat of distant times. They seize on some remarkable instances of great crimes or ferocity of manners at a particular period, and take these

[1] Chap. iii. 30, v. 31. [2] Chap. x. 1-5.

as proofs of the general character of the age in which they occurred: whereas, in many cases, if such things had been common, they would not have been recorded by the historians of those times; for they would not have been noticed as being remarkable. It is less flattering to our own pride, but the more humble view is more likely to be true, if we believe that human nature does not differ much at one time from another; and as we should complain of any one who should judge of the manners of our time from the crimes of the greatest miscreants, so let us believe that robber-knights and squires of the highway were not the common sort of old English gentlemen in the middle ages.[3] There can be no doubt that there were in those times which we call most rude, many good men, whose manners were refined and hearts softened with the spirit of Christian love: of these good men not a few are still remembered in the good works they have left behind; of others the memorial on earth is lost; but they did not live in vain. And an Englishman has reason to be proud of his country, which above all others has

[3] Mr. David Hume, when he records any atrocious deed of these ages, commonly sums it up in his history with the remark, "Such were the manners of the times." See his History of England, chap. xii. § 24. If the manners of the times had sanctioned such atrocities, we should not find the punishment of the offenders also recorded.

abounded in offerings of its wealth to the honour of God: sometimes it may be that the means used were not the best, but the end was noble; it was a noble triumph over self, which led them, without sparing for cost, to dedicate their substance at the altars of their Church. The deeds of such public benefactors are a pattern for all times; they have done more for the good of mankind than many warriors and conquerors; they are partakers of the blessedness of those free givers, who sold their land, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.[4]

One particular institution of the middle ages it has been the aim of the writer to set forth in a different light from that in which it is usually seen,—the institution of monasteries and religious orders. Whatever good or harm there may have been in this institution, it is impossible not to lament the common misrepresentations which have prevailed respecting it. It is impossible for a serious mind to suppose that a rule of life so early introduced into the Christian Church, so approved by the most eminent fathers and confessors of those early times, and so long kept up in almost every Christian country, can have been allowed without some providential purpose. It is a great mistake to think that the institution of these religious houses was as faulty in its first

[4] Acts iv. 37.

state, as after it was made, in the Western parts of Europe, the chief engine for advancing the usurpation of the popes of Rome. When this kind of Christian discipline arose in the East, it was regarded with favour by St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, and St. Augustine; men whose names are mentioned with honour in the Prayer-Book and Homilies of the English Church, and who will be honoured as long as the name of Christianity endures. And it flourished most in times of public disorder and violence in later days; that in such places of refuge the oppressed might find shelter, learning and useful arts might find exercise, and the spark of religion might be kept alive, when it was in danger of being put out through the wars and tumults, the fierceness and ignorance of mankind. It has, therefore, been attempted to give the English reader a faithful picture of the life and manners of these houses and societies, not disguising their faults or corruptions, but setting forth what is too much forgotten, the many benefits, both to the state and to private life, which proceeded from them.

For authorities on these subjects, the writer has had recourse to the earliest records, and authors who lived nearest the times of which they treat; to the Saxon histories and chronicles from the time of Bede and Alcuin, and the

Norman from Ingulf, Eadmer, and Malmsbury. For access to many stores of English antiquity, he is indebted to the kindness of the Dean and Chapter of York, who have liberally granted him the use of such books as he needed from the Minster Library.

Much help has been derived from the labours of Archbishop Usher, Bishops Tanner, Stillingfleet, and Collier, the learned Henry Wharton, and the Rev. Henry Soames; to which must be added a work not yet complete, but of great value to the knowledge of old English history, Mr. Kemble's collection of Anglo-Saxon Charters. The writer has also to express his best thanks to his friend the Rev. James C. Stafford, Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, who furnished him with the use of a manuscript Church History of his own preparing, for the advancement of this work; and to the Rev. H. B. W. Churton, his brother, for much useful information from the Oxford Libraries; to the Rev. John Williams, of Llan Hirnant, near Bala, for a letter on the ancient Welch Church; and to many other literary friends.

The common popular Church-histories have been less consulted. Thomas Fuller is a writer who will always be a favourite with English readers; but he is rather a humorous moraliser on old history than an historian. He seems

to have ranged through ancient records to find subjects on which he could play off his quaint fancies, rather than to record facts; and though his pen is often pointed with moral truth, he sometimes sports with historic truth for the sake of a droll thought, which at the moment seems to have crossed his brain. For instance, near the outset, he speaks of the old British tradition, that in each of the Roman cities of Britain there dwelt a flamen or Roman priest, under a superior, called in the tradition an archflamen; in place of whom, when the country became Christian, were substituted bishops under an archbishop. "These flamens and archflamens," says he, "seem to be *flams* and *archflams*, notorious falsehoods." Whereas, when Roman paganism was the established religion, what can be more likely than that there should have been a priest of that religion in every place, and that these priests should have had a superior, as they had at Rome?

There are many notices of early English Church-history in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*; but it must be considered as a misfortune that so much credit has been given to this writer, and that he has found so many imitators; for his style is that of a coarse satire rather than of history.

The work of Mr. Southey is of a very differ-

ent character; but his plan has led him to notice very briefly those facts on which the writer of this volume has thought it necessary to enlarge; and in some instances it has been deemed right to pronounce a milder opinion of men and things, remembering Mr. Southey's own admirable maxim, "He who is most charitable in his judgment is generally the least unjust."

Much help in the study of ancient manners has been afforded by the French work of M. Guizot, the *History of Civilization in France*, a work written in a very different spirit from some historical speculations of that country. And still more acknowledgment is due to the author of some Letters on the Dark Ages, published at intervals, for several years past, in the *British Magazine*. Works of this kind will enable the world before long to see that these ages have been called dark, chiefly because the moderns have chosen to remain in the dark about them. And the author of these Letters deserves the thanks of every candid inquirer for the excellent warnings he has given against the rash censures pronounced on antiquity. May the spirit which dictated the following sentence be found to have guided the pen of the writer of these pages!

"If there is any subject which should make the historian's hand tremble, while he guides the pen of truth, it is the Church of Christ,

which He has purchased with His blood; which is, by His dispensation, militant here on earth, dispersed through this naughty world, and every page of its history rendered obscure by the crafts and assaults of the devil, the weakness and wickedness of the flesh, the friendship and the enmity of the world, the sins of bad men, the infirmities of good ones; and by the divine ordinance, that it shall ever be a body consisting of many members, often incapable, not merely of executing, but of appreciating the office of each other."

POSTSCRIPT.

The demand for more than one reprint of this little work has enabled the writer to avail himself of the suggestions of friends and critics, to whom he is much indebted, to make a few additions and corrections, which it is hoped may render it more complete. The additions will be found chiefly to relate to the history of the Saxon period; as, the Metrical Creed in chap. vii.; the mission of Winfrid, chap. viii.; the changes in the Church attempted by king Offa, chap. x.; the account of St. Olave, chap. xiv.; and a few of less importance. The corrections do not affect any material fact or opinion expressed in the former editions of the work, but only a few trifling mis-statements; as, one into which the writer had been led by T. Warton respecting the old font at Winchester, which any reader will now be able to correct, who has seen the well-executed cast of that font, taken by order of the Cambridge Camden Society. The only exception is the account formerly

given of the doctrine of Berenger in chap. .vx The writer has lately perused the work of Berenger, which has been discovered and published in Germany a few years since;[5] and is now of opinion, with Bishop Cosin, that he maintained the true doctrine respecting the Holy Communion. See also Mr. Massingberd's *History of the Reformation*, chap. ii. p. 39, 40.

On other points, on which some objections have been made, particularly the account of Archbishop Becket, the writer has re-examined his statements, and altered a few words and phrases; but he has not found reason to change his view of that portion or period of Church-history. It is true that the majority of modern English writers have judged differently; but their judgment has been formed with too exclusive a regard to the errors of the religious creed of those days, forgetting the errors on the other side in the state of the civil government; how all freedom of the subject was subverted, justice was bought and sold, and the goods of the Church made over to simoniac priests, or invaded to support the prince's private prodigality. The authorities to be consulted are the historians of the time, and the existing letters of the actors

[5] Berlin, 1834.

in those troubled scenes; not Lord Lyttleton's panegyric on Henry II., or the sceptical philosophy and loose morality of Hume.

THE

Early English Church.

CHAPTER I.

THE ANCIENT BRITISH CHURCH.

Prowess and arts did tame
And tune men's hearts, before the Gospel came;
Strength levell'd grounds; art made a garden there;
Then shower'd religion, and made all to bear.

HERBERT.

THE apostle St. Paul, after his first imprisonment at Rome, is reported by the early Church-historians to have fulfilled his intention of preaching the gospel in Spain, and to have gone to the utmost bounds of the West, and the islands that lie in the ocean. It has therefore been supposed that he was either himself in Britain, or that he sent some of the companions of his travels to make known on these shores the name of Christ. It is certain that a Christian Church was planted here in the time of the apostles, and, as it would appear, at the date of St. Paul's travels to the West, A.D. 63.

The country was at that time partly held by colonies of the Romans, partly still under its old inhabitants, the Britons, a tribe of those nations who were descended from Gomer, son of Japheth, and the first who went to dwell in the western parts of Europe. These Gomerians, or Kimmerians, appear to have been settled in Spain, France, and Britain, at least six hundred years before the birth of Christ; as the prophet Ezekiel speaks of the merchants of Tyre as then bringing home from Tarshish, or Portugal, the tin and lead, which they seem to have procured, as they did about two centuries later, from the coasts of Cornwall (Ezek. xxvii. 12). The Britons, like all other ancient heathens, were idolators, the knowledge of the true God being clouded by the prevailing superstition of Druidism; which, taking its rise from among the inhabitants of this island, had spread far among the tribes of the neighbouring continent. The knowledge of letters was only learnt by them from other nations; and what other knowledge they had was preserved chiefly by songs committed to memory; the learning of such songs, describing the nature of things in heaven and earth, and recording the deeds of their forefathers, being the main part of the education of the young. Like all other idolators, it was a common practice with them to offer human victims to their gods: sometimes a man who suffered from a fit of sickness would devote himself to be sacrificed by the Druid's hand, or in a time of danger of life or limb, he would vow to offer another life as a price and ransom for his own. The prisoners whom they took in battle, and malefactors whom the Druid had judged, were commonly sentenced to be burnt by fire. What seems to have made them more reckless of shedding blood was, their belief that the soul, when driven out of the body, only changed to a new lodging, either passing

into another man, or going for a time to animate the form of some brute creature.

The Romans, where they gained dominion, established a different religion from the Druids'; but their own pagan rites and cruel laws were scarcely less destructive of human life. At this very period, when by the mercy of God the light of truth began to enlighten the Gentiles, and the feet of apostolic men first trod the shores of Britain, a Roman of high rank was murdered by a domestic slave, to whom he had promised liberty, but had not kept his promise. According to the law of their forefathers, when a slave lifted his hand against his master, the whole of the family of slaves were to be put to death with the offender: and on this occasion, though the people rose in tumult to resist the law, the senate and the prince were deaf to the calls of mercy. A body of soldiers restrained the multitude, while four hundred innocent persons were led to death, and among them many aged men, women, and children, that no master of slaves might in future feel himself exposed to a like peril.

Such was the state of the world, civil or barbarous, when the gospel was first preached abroad among the nations, and St. Paul wrote to commend the slave Onesimus to the brotherly love of his master Philemon. It was then, when the earth was full of violence and cruel habitations, that the Prince of Peace came to set up his throne.

The wars and persecutions which followed the first preaching of the gospel in Britain have destroyed all certain records of Christianity in these early times. It is said that persons of rank among the Roman inhabitants, and kings of different provinces under the Romans, who were left, like Herod and his sons in Judæa, to rule under the conquering power, embraced the yoke of Christ. The Romans

were now spreading their conquests over the greater part of the island; but the doctrine of the cross spread faster and more far. In the following century it is recorded, that places to which the armies of the invaders had never approached, were known to the heralds of the Redeemer's kingdom. And a proof of their success is the dying out of the superstition of the Druids; which is no longer to be met with in the history of the country after the second century of Christianity.

The Romans held twenty-eight cities in England and Wales, besides many other stations along the great roads which they made from one end of the kingdom to the other. Some of these cities, as London, were settled as places of trade and commerce; others were given to old soldiers, as colonies for husbandry, as Colchester and Maldon; others, as York, Chester, and Caer-leon on Usk, were more especially places of defence, to keep in obedience the less peaceful provinces, or to be ready against attack from the northern Britons, who were never entirely subdued. As each of these cities was founded, a temple was raised to the emperor in whose reign it was founded, and priests were appointed for the service of the temple; the Roman religion in that age being rather the worship of the living prince, than of the idol-gods of their fathers. It is most likely that as Christianity gained ground, and the people came no longer to burn incense to Cæsar, the temple was shut up or turned to other uses, and a Christian bishop resided in these cities instead of a heathen priest. For in the early ages of the Church, wherever the Christian religion prevailed, it was the custom to have a bishop placed in almost every well-inhabited city.

It was not, however, without many sore struggles that the Christian religion maintained this conflict.

The earlier persecutions, from the time of Nero, had been short in duration, or confined to other parts of the Roman empire; but at length, in the time of Diocletian, it pleased the Almighty to permit the cause of truth, for the space of ten years (A.D. 303), to undergo the most severe trial which the world had ever known. Gildas, the earliest British historian, tells us that at this time "the Christian churches throughout the world were levelled with the ground, all the copies of the Scriptures which could any where be found were burnt in the public streets, and the pries's and bishops of the Lord's flock slaughtered, together with their charge; so that in some provinces not even a trace of Christianity remained." Ancient letters, carved on stone, were found many ages afterwards in Spain, which were inscriptions set up by the persecutors, in memory of what they called "the destruction of the Christian superstition," and the "extinction of the Christian name."

In Britain the persecution was less severe than in other parts of the empire; Constantius, the father of the Christian emperor CONSTANTINE, having the government of some of the western provinces, and residing chiefly in Britain. Constantius was a heathen, but an enemy to persecution; his authority, however, was not independent of the emperor's, and he was obliged to comply so far as to order that the Christian churches should be pulled down. When, after two years, he received a share of the empire for his own, he commanded a restoration of the buildings; but in the meantime there were many Roman officers and magistrates, and many of the pagan people, who were ready to take advantage of the emperor's edict, to carry the Christians to prison and to death. Where Constantius himself resided, at Eboracum or York, we hear of none who suffered, but at many other places the British Church was

found worthy to supply its martyrs to the cause of truth; and many of both sexes died confessing the faith with great constancy and courage.

Among the foremost of this noble army were Aaron and Julius, two citizens of Caer-leon, and ALBAN, an officer in the Roman troops, who resided at the Roman town of Verulam, near the site of the town which has since been called St. Alban's, after his own name. Alban, before the persecution arose, was a heathen; but a Christian priest who had fled for shelter from his pursuers to Alban's house, became the instrument of his conversion. Struck with the devout behaviour of his guest, who passed great part of the night as well as his days in watching and prayer, Alban began to inquire of his religion; and the end was, that he was soon persuaded to turn from idolatry, and to become a hearty Christian. He had for a few days enjoyed the company and instructions of this new friend, when the Roman governor of Verulam, hearing that the priest was hidden at Alban's house, sent a party of soldiers to take him. Alban presented himself at the door in the cassock usually worn by his guest, and, before the mistake was discovered, was brought before the magistrates for the person whose dress he wore. There boldly declaring himself a Christian, after enduring to be beaten with rods, he was sentenced to be beheaded. The place of his death was a rising ground beyond the little river Ver, to which the passage was by a bridge, then thronged with a great crowd of people, flocking to behold the spectacle. Alban, eager to reach the place before the close of day, instead of waiting to cross the bridge, made his way through the stream; and this act of devoted zeal is said to have had such an effect on the soldier who was appointed to be his executioner, that he threw down the sword, and asked to die with him. The reque-

was granted, and the two comrades received together the palm of martyrdom. The heathens, seeing the ill success of this example, by which Christianity was still further advanced, instead of being put down, gave over their deeds of bloodshed; and the Christians returning from the woods and wastes, in which they had lain concealed, came back to the abodes of men, and began to restore their worship and rebuild their churches. In after-years, the wonder of a simple age was shewn in tales of miracles which were said to have attended Alban's martyrdom. What was better, and a due honour to the first martyr of Britain, a church of beautiful structure was built upon the place. This was standing in the time of Bede, about four hundred years after Alban's death. Offa, king of Mercia, in the eighth century, founded an abbey there; and the abbey-church, partly built by the Saxons with Roman bricks, taken, as it seems, from a still older sacred building, is one of the most noble standing monuments of the ancient Christianity of Britain.[1]

In the time of the Emperor Constantine, whose reign shortly followed, the Christians in Britain were in peaceful enjoyment of their churches, and religion flourished. Constantine himself was a native of this island, the son of St. Helena, a British lady; and he seems to have honoured the British bishops, who were sent for to attend at councils, held by his authority at different places, for the settling of order and promoting the true faith. There were bishops

[1] It is much to be regretted, as the learned and pious Joseph Mede used to observe, that St. Alban's has never been made the seat of a bishopric. The place is well suited for it; the good name of the martyr would be fitly honoured by it; and the wrong done to the church by those who spoiled and sold it, after the abbey was broken up, would thus be amended as it ought.

from Britain, whose names are recorded, at the council of Arles in France, A.D. 314. They seem also to have been at Nice, or Nicea, in Asia, at the great council held there, A.D. 325, where the excellent creed, since called the Nicene creed, was received, as the historians tell us, "with the unanimous consent of the Churches of Italy, Africa, Egypt, Spain, France, and Britain, and in the Asiatic dioceses." And among other good laws for the ordering of the Church, it was determined both at Nice and at Arles, that no bishop should be constituted without the consent of all the bishops of his province, and that three bishops should be present at his consecration; a law which is still observed in the Church of England at this time. From this it would appear, that the Church of Britain was, like all other Christian Churches, from the first under the government of bishops, and that these bishops, in different provinces, were subject to a patriarch or archbishop. There were at this period three Roman provinces in Britain: one, which included the southern counties of England; a second, which took in most of the midland, and some of the northern counties; and a third, which consisted of Wales, and part of England bordering on Wales. In each of these provinces were bishops, who seem to have been under an archbishop respectively of London, York, and Caer-leon on Usk. This was the common order of Church-government at the first settlement of Christianity throughout the world. "There was no Church," as Bishop Stillingfleet well observes, "founded by the apostles, which had not a succession of bishops from them too." And these were, in all the provinces, subject to a primate of their own number, who was to confirm them in their different sees, to call together councils of bishops and clergy, and to hear appeals that might be made to him from the subor-

dinate bishops. Thus, the bishop of Rome was, at this period, patriarch of the middle part of Italy; the bishop of Milan of the northern part; and the bishops of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, had the same authority in some of the Eastern provinces. There was no bishop, whether at Rome or elsewhere, who at this time pretended to any authority beyond his own province.

Shortly after this, the peace of the Church in the East being troubled with the doctrines of the Arians, who denied that the Son of God was from everlasting, and so made him to be a creature like angels or men, the British bishops were summoned by Constantius, son of Constantine, A.D. 347, to another council at Sardica, near the site of the modern city of Sophia in Bulgaria, now a part of the Turkish dominions. And again they were sent for to a council at Ariminum, now Rimini, in Italy, A.D. 360. At these councils, the artifices of the Arians had gained them support from men of power in the state; but though they thus obtained a short advantage, the firm spirit of St. Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, who underwent the severest persecutions from them, supported many to stand up in defence of the true faith. And both St. Athanasius, and St. Hilary, the famous father of the Church, bishop of Poictiers in the country now called France, have borne testimony that the Christians of Britain kept the faith as it is taught in the Nicene creed, and preserved a good conscience with unshaken stedfastness.

The Picts, who then inhabited the North, and Scots, coming from Ireland in the reign of Constantius, were now first found to be troublesome neighbours to the Britons. Their inroads appear to have left the British Christians in a state of much poverty; so that the bishops, who went to the council at

Ariminum, were obliged to depend on the emperor's bounty for board and lodging. But this distress was removed by the Roman generals, who were at this period sent into Britain, and drove back the Picts and Scots. It may be that these sufferings tended to keep the minds of Christians humble and devout, so that the impiety of the Arians did not at first gain ground among them.

But towards the close of the fourth century, there were Arian teachers in Britain; and this error was soon followed by another, which has commonly been found to prevail with it, and which was now first publicly taught by Pelagius, or Morgan, a native of Wales. Morgan was a man of learning, who had left Britain in early life, had travelled in Italy and the East, and passed much of his time in acquiring knowledge and conversing with the most eminent teachers of Christian doctrine. He had become acquainted with St. Chrysostom and St Augustine, who both flourished at this time: and they were the more grieved at his fall into heresy, as his piety and talents had gained him their affection and respect. The doctrines he taught were such as to overthrow man's need of God's grace, and to make human nature sufficient for itself. "God made me," he said; "but if I am made righteous, it is my own work." He did not himself teach in Britain, having died abroad; but his doctrines are said to have been brought into this country by Agricola, son of Siverian, an eastern bishop, who was noted for his enmity against St. Chrysostom. The British Christians, finding that the Pelagian doctrines were gaining disciples in the country, and wishing for the help of some skilful champions of the faith, sent to the bishops of Gaul or France; who, at a council held at Troyes, chose St. Germain, bishop of Auxerre, and Lupus, bishop of Troyes, to visit

Britain. This Lupus was brother to Vincent of Lerins, a famous Christian teacher of that time, whose book, called "A Defence of the Catholic Faith," was afterwards of the greatest use to Archbishop Cranmer and Bishop Ridley at the time of the English Reformation.

Germain and Lupus were received by the British Christians with the greatest respect; and so great was the desire to see and hear them, that they were obliged on some occasions to preach in the streets and in the open fields, as there were then no village churches. They were enabled to speak with such conviction to the conscience of their hearers, that the Pelagians soon lost the public favour; and when a public council was called at Verulam, A.D. 429, though there were many persons of wealth and influence who had espoused their cause, and who made a show of supporting them, the two champions poured forth such a torrent of eloquence, well enforced by texts from the gospels and writings of the apostles, that the vanity and unfaithfulness of their opponents were completely detected. The very leaders in the dispute are said to have acknowledged their errors; and the decision of the council against them was received with shouts of joy by the assembled people.

But in the mean time the state of Britain had begun to be exposed to other troubles. The great empire of Rome was now falling to pieces, weakened by divisions within itself, and attacked by the Goths and Vandals, and other warlike nations from the north of Europe and Asia. The policy of the Romans was, to govern the subject provinces by military stations, and to deprive the natives, except such as were enlisted in their armies, of the use of arms; so that when their masters were no longer able to protect them, the Britons were left, like the

Israelites under the Philistines; "there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people."[2] Added to this, they had about this time been compelled to send out of the country a great portion of their young men to fight for several pretenders to the empire, who were set up by the soldiers in Britain, and seized upon some of the provinces beyond sea. Most of these young men never returned. One large party of them settled in that part of France which has since received from them the name of Brittany, or Bretagne, where the country people still speak a language like the Welch; and this settlement, as we shall see, afterwards became a place of refuge to the distressed Christians of Britain.

Rome was taken by Alaric, king of the Goths, A.D. 409; but as he died shortly after his victory, and his forces were broken up, the empire was not utterly ruined. The Romans still sent troops into Britain till the year 426, and assisted the natives to build again the wall of the Emperor Severus, which extended across from the mouth of the Tyne to that of the Esk, beyond Newcastle and Carlisle, as a protection against the Picts and Scots. No sooner, however, had they departed, than these enemies from the North broke through the wall, which the Britons were unable to defend, and continued their bloody inroads; and at the same time the sea-coast being left unguarded, the Saxons from Germany crossed over, and carried off spoil from the nearest shores.

So that when Germain with his companions visited Britain, though the Saxons had as yet made no fixed conquests in the country, there was much danger and alarm; and it seems that the Britons now

[2] 1 Sam. xiii. 22.

began to draw off and strengthen themselves in the mountainous parts of Wales, as well as in Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Cornwall, to which the rest of them, who preserved their independence, afterwards retired. It was in Flintshire, near the town of Mold, where the Britons were assembled, and Germain was sent for to encourage them by his presence and exhortations. An army of Saxons had joined with the Picts, and had crossed the river Dee, when by a stratagem of Germain they were surrounded by the Britons, and defeated with great loss. The battle was fought at Easter, when many of the young soldiers had been newly baptised; and from the shout which they raised as they hurled the rocks suddenly down upon the heads of the invaders, it was called long afterwards the Hallelujah victory.[3]

It seems to have been at this period that St. Germain, who again visited Britain a few years later, advised the Britons to found monasteries, as places to preserve religion and useful learning in troubled times. While the Roman empire lasted, the emperors, from the time of Constantine, had taken pains to establish schools in the principal towns of the provinces; and they gave an allowance from the state to the teachers of grammar and other branches of learning, more especially to the teachers of the art of speaking; which, while books were only to be multiplied by writing, was of much more importance than it is now. For people were then obliged to learn, by listening to public readers or reciters, what they may now learn from books. At these schools the principal teachers were Christian clergymen. So

[3] This battle is supposed by Archbishop Usher to have been fought at Maes-Garmon (i. e. "the field of Germain") in Flintshire.

that when Julian the apostate became emperor, who had renounced Christianity, he took great pains to drive out the Christian teachers from these schools: "If they are not content," he said, "with what the old authors say of the mighty gods, let them go to the churches of *the Galileans*" (so he used to call the Christians), "and expound Matthew and Luke there." This has always been the practice of unbelieving governors, to separate true religion from education. As Julian died in the third year of his reign, his attempt had but little success; but the bishops of the Christian Church saw the danger, and began to provide against it.

At this time, St. Ambrose was bishop of Milan, and St. Martin bishop of Tours in France, whose name is in our calendar, and to whom many of our old churches are dedicated. These bishops began to promote the building of monasteries in Italy and France, as places of education, where the will of the reigning prince might not prevent Christian youths from being taught the principles of their religion. And as they were both men of rank and fortune before they were chosen to preside over those bishopries, they employed much of their wealth in this good work. As the troubles of the Roman empire increased, the monasteries in the western parts increased. They were now wanted, both to supply the loss of the Roman schools, and as houses of refuge, which some of the rude nations who had heard of Christianity might be willing to respect. For some of the Goths had, before the fall of the Roman empire, received the knowledge of Christ; and their bishop, Ulphilas, had taught them the use of letters, and translated the Scriptures into their language, about A.D. 365, in the lifetime of St. Martin and St. Ambrose.

It was, therefore, according to their example, that St. Germain recommended the Britons to found monasteries. He brought with him at his second visit two eminent Christian teachers, Dubricius and Iltutus: the first was elected bishop of Llandaff: the second had a college of pupils at a place called from him Llanyltad, or "St. Iltad's," in Glamorganshire. Both were of great service to the distressed Britons. A more famous place of education was that which St. Germain seems to have founded in North Wales, the monastery of Bangor-Iscoed, near Malpas and Wrexham, on the Dee; the remains of which were still visible, after the lapse of a thousand years, a short time before the Reformation. The memory of St. Germain, and of the benefits he did to the British or Welch Church, is preserved in the name of Llanarmon, "St. Germain's," in Denbighshire, and the town named after him in Cornwall, which was afterwards for a short time under the Saxons made a bishop's see. He died on a visit to Italy, A.D. 448, the year before the Saxons first established themselves in Britain.

At the time of the departure of the Romans lived FASTIDIUS, bishop, as it is supposed, of London, who is the only Christian teacher among the ancient Britons of whom any doctrinal work yet remains. He has left a short treatise on the character of a Christian life, addressed to a pious widow named Fatalis: in which, after modestly excusing his own want of knowledge and little skill, and begging her to "accept his household bread, since he cannot offer her the finest flour," he shews, with very plain and good arguments, that Christians are called to imitate Him whom they worship; that without a life of piety and uprightness, it is vain to presume on the mercy of God, or to boast of the name of Christian; that it was always the rule of God's deal-

ings with mankind to love righteousness and hate iniquity.

"It is the will of God," says he, "that his people should be holy, and apart from all stain of unrighteousness; so righteous, so merciful, so pure, so unspotted by the world, so single-hearted, that the heathen should find no fault in them, but say with wonder, Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

"We read in the evangelist that one came to our Saviour, and asked him what he should do to gain eternal life. The answer he received was, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.' Our Lord did not say, Keep faith only. For if faith is all that is required, it is overmuch to say that the commandments must be kept. But far be it from me that I should suppose my Lord to have taught any thing overmuch. Let this be said only by those whose sins have numbered them with the children of perdition.

"Let no man then deceive or mislead his brother: except a man is righteous, he hath not life; except he keep the commandments of Christ, he hath no part with him. A Christian is one who shews mercy to all; who is provoked by no wrong; who suffers not the poor in this world to be oppressed; who relieves the wretched, succours the needy; who mourns with mourners, and feels the pain of another as his own; who is moved to tears by the sight of another's tears; whose house is open to all; whose table is spread for all the poor; whose good deeds all men know; whose wrongful dealing no man feels; who serves God day and night, and ever meditates upon his precepts; who is made poor to the world, that he may be rich towards God; who is content to be inglorious among men, that he may appear glorious

before God and his angels; who has no deceit in his heart; whose soul is simple and undefiled, and his conscience faithful and pure; whose whole mind rests on God; whose whole hope is fixed on Christ, desiring heavenly things rather than earthly, and leaving human things to lay hold on things divine."

He concludes this excellent character of a Christian life by applying it to the good widow to whom it is addressed: "If all those who are called Christians ought to be such as I describe, you need not be told what kind of widow you ought to be; for if you are indeed Christ's widow, you ought to be a pattern to all who lead a Christian life. What Christ's widow ought to be, the apostle tells you: 'She that is a widow indeed trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.' And elsewhere the same apostle marks out the deeds and conversation of a true widow: 'Let a widow be chosen who is well reported of for good works: if she have brought up children' (that is, if she have brought them up to God); 'if she have lodged strangers; if she have washed the saints' feet; if she have relieved the afflicted; if she have diligently followed every good work.'

"Be then you such as the Lord has taught you to be; such as the apostle would have set forth as a pattern. Be holy, humble, and quiet, and employed without ceasing in works of mercy and righteousness. Above all, ever study the commandments of your Lord; earnestly give yourself to prayers and psalms; that, if it be possible, no one may ever find you employed but in reading or in prayer. And when you are so employed, remember me."

This doctrine of the ancient British bishop is suited to all times. And it may be judged by this only remaining specimen, that there were, in the age of the fathers of the Church, in this country

also teachers well deserving of the name of Christian fathers.

It was at this time also, in the midst of the troubles of Britain, that the Britons sent a mission to preach the gospel to the Picts, then inhabiting the southern parts of Scotland. The leader of this mission was ST. NINIAN, whose name is still preserved in the traditions of that country. He is said to have converted many of these wild people from their idolatry, and to have founded a church, which was long the seat of other bishops after him, at Whitherne, on the coast of Galloway. The old British historian, Gildas, speaks of the Picts and Scots, before they were converted, as a very savage race, "wearing more hair on their ruffian faces than they had clothes on their bodies."

Another eminent Christian teacher of this time was ST. PATRICK, the apostle of Ireland. He seems to have been a native of North Britain, and a pupil of St. Germain; but the history of his life is so darkened by strange legends of later ages, that it is very difficult to learn the truth about him. This, however, is certain, that Celestine, bishop of Rome, about A.D. 430, ordained a bishop called Pallady, to go on a mission to the Scots in Ireland; who, finding little success there, crossed over to the Picts in Galloway, among whom he died not many years after the mission of St. Ninian. But after his death, St. Patrick was sent by Celestine, or by St. Germain, and had a much more favourable reception.[4] There is no reason to doubt that he established Christianity in that country. He appears to have taken with him several other teachers, by whose help he was enabled to found churches, and to set up monasteries with schools, as St. Germain had done in Wales. The

[4] Malmsbury, Hist. i. §. 22.

Isle of Man is said also to have received its first bishop from St. Patrick, about A.D. 447. The rude people, among whom these Christian missionaries laboured, have handed down to us only doubtful legends and stories of strange wonders, instead of history of their times. But it is plain that after the mission of Patrick to Ireland, the people, who were before ignorant of arts and letters, became acquainted with both; and the light of Christianity, once kindled there, has never since entirely expired.

It is impossible to find any thing more disastrous than the state of Britain at this time, when the Christian part of the population made such efforts to preserve both their religion and their country, and zealous men went out to spread the gospel among the neighbouring nations. A famine had followed the ravages of the Picts and Scots; then arose a bloody civil war among the native chiefs, and the Roman Britons, those who had lived with the Romans in their cities, and learnt their language, were cut off almost to a man. While they were in this state of weakness, the Picts and Scots again returned; and the sad and suffering people of South Britain, with Vortigern their prince, resolved to invite the Saxons, A.D. 449.

From this time Christianity began to disappear from the most important and fruitful provinces of Great Britain. As the Saxons founded, one after another, their petty kingdoms, they destroyed the churches, and the priests fled before them. Some found refuge in the colony of Brittany; others escaped to the borders of Wales. There, it would seem, they were still in safety; and the names of St. David, St. Asaph, and St. Patern, who founded churches and bishoprics long after the arrival of the Saxons, at the places still called by their names, shew that Christianity was still held in honour by the ancient Bri-

tons.[5] There were British bishops still dwelling in the parts invaded, as long as there were any means of assembling a flock of Christians round them. But it is an accusation to which they lie open, that they made no attempt to convert the Saxons. St. Sampson, bishop of York, retreated into Brittany as soon as the north of England began to be troubled by invaders. He was there the founder of a bishopric and monastery at Dol, where many other British Christians afterwards found shelter; particularly St. Malo, or Machutus, St. Brice, also founders of towns and bishops' sees in Brittany, and the learned Gildas, surnamed the Wise, the earliest Christian historian of Britain.

It was at the same period, about A.D. 565, that ST. COLUMBA, from one of St. Patrick's monasteries, Durrogh in Ireland, undertook his mission to the Picts of the northern parts of Scotland, and founded his famous monastery and school of learning at Iona, one of the Western Islands. There is scarcely any other institution which Englishmen have reason to remember with feelings of equal gratitude; for from this retreat of piety came forth those heralds of the gospel, who taught the greater part of our rude forefathers. From this retreat, called from its founder Icolmkill, or "St. Columba's Isle," the savage clans of the Highlands received the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion. And no doubt it was so appointed by God's providence, that Christianity should be planted in North Britain at the very time when it was nearly driven out from the South, that the means of its restoration might be at hand. A very few years afterwards, the last British bishops,

[5] St. David's, instead of the old see of Caer-Jeon, founded A.D. 519; St. Asaph, about A.D. 580; Llan Badarn Vawr, or "Great St. Patern's," a fine old church in Cardiganshire, and for some time a bishop's see, A.D. 540.

Theonas of London, and Thadioc of York, retreated with the remnant of their flocks into Wales: and thus, the pagan Saxons having overrun all the lowland portion of the country, the saints whose memory is honoured in Wales, and St. Columba in the North, were the only remaining teachers of Church of Britain.

CHAPTER II.

THE SAXONS. MISSION OF AUGUSTINE. CONVERSION OF KENT.

The heavenly city, in the days of its pilgrimage on earth, enlists citizens out of all nations, and assembles a company of pilgrims out of all tongues; not caring for differences of manners, laws, and customs, but rather seeking to preserve them for the sake of earthly peace, if only they hinder not the religion which teaches the worship of the only Most High and True.

ST. AUGUSTINE. *City of God*, b. xix.

HE Anglo-Saxons, from whom we have received the language which we speak, and from whom the far greater portion of Englishmen are sprung, were of the tribes of nations inhabiting ancient Germany, who, when the appointed time was come, were employed by God's providence in breaking up the great empire of old Rome. It is plain that the laws and manners of the Romans were too little amended by the footing which Christianity had gained among them. The later emperors, after Constantine, had generally professed themselves Christians, and it was the public religion of the empire; the service of the more eminent Christian bishops was also found useful in promoting obedience to the laws: but a great part of the people were still pagans, stubbornly persisting in their old enmity to the cross. Even after Rome had been taken by the Goths, this pagan

Royal Cities with Bishops Sees as CANTERBURY ♁ Bishops Sees ..... +
Royal Cities as ..... Tamworth ♁ Monasteries ..... °

party made a struggle to revive the persecutions against the Christians, persuading their countrymen that their misfortunes were owing to their having cast off their idol-gods; as the Jews in Egypt replied to Jeremiah, that their captivity came from their leaving off to burn incense to the queen of heaven.[1] Among such a people there were many who lived abandoned to the most shameful vices of heathenism; and the laws of Ro · were never able to reach them. So that there can be no doubt that the confession of one of their own poets spoke the truth:

> The far-off Irish shores
> And Orkney isles have seen our conquering fleet,
> Orkney, where summer eve and morning meet;
> But the bold Briton, by our arms o'ercome,
> Scorns the foul deeds his victors do in Rome.

On the contrary, the Goths and Germans, whom they called Barbarians, though their habits were fierce and warlike, were alive to the shame of these unmanly morals, and severely punished such offenders. They sentenced traitors to die by hanging; but the worst transgressors against chastity they drowned by night in ponds or marshes. "It was well done," says a Roman who speaks of it; "for bold crimes ought to be punished openly, but base and shameful ones to be hidden in darkness.' When they heard of the Romans giving up their leisure hours to theatres and public shows, "The people who have devised such amusements," they said, "act as if they had neither children nor wives at home."[2] They had therefore a far more strict regard to the sacred tie of marriage, and to the honour of woman; not permitting, what has been

[1] Jer. xliv. 18.
[2] St. Chrysostom, Homily xxxviii. on St. Matthew.

common with other heathen nations, that a man should have more wives than one. No doubt the finger of God was in those wars, which made them masters of the Roman empire, that they might, in due time, promote the advancement of his Church by means of customs more suited to a union with Christianity than the corrupt state of society in Rome, now fast tending to its own decay.

The Saxons were idolators,—as the names of the days of the week, which we have received from them, still remain to remind us. They worshipped the sun and moon; Thor, the thunderer; Woden, or Odin; Tiow, god of war; and other deities, whom it is not necessary to inquire after. As all false religions began in corruptions of the true, it would seem that they had still some dim belief of One great Being more excellent than these: for they had among them the name of God, which we have received from them; it is a name which means *the Good*. And though in rude and warlike times the notion of goodness is applied to bravery in war rather than deeds of mercy, and so their imaginations may have seen in Him a Being able to destroy, rather than ready to save, yet it is a proof of a purer tradition which they had from the beginning. But more than this dim shadow of the religion of the patriarchs, they do not seem to have possessed; and the want of a Mediator between God and man left their religion without hope or comfort, and drove them to seek from the spirits of dead warriors or kings such help as they knew not how to ask from One higher but unknown.

The first of the Saxons who established themselves in Britain were Hengist and Horsa with their followers, who founded the kingdom of Kent about A.D. 450. Before the end of that century were founded also the kingdoms of the South and West

Saxons; and thus all the provinces along the southern coast of Britain, except Cornwall and part of Devonshire, were lost to Christianity. In the year 527, another great body, of Angles, invaded the eastern and midland districts, and by degrees conquering their way, established the kingdoms of Essex, East Anglia, and Mercia. The kingdom of Northumberland had its rise still earlier, but it was not firmly settled till about a century after the landing of Hengist in Kent.

Against these invaders the Britons made no effectual resistance but in the west of England, where their king Emrys, called also Aurelius Ambrosius, one of the last Roman Britons, gained a great victory over Hengist, and drove him back into the province he had first occupied. When the West Saxons afterwards, under Cerdic, made an attempt to gain possession of Somersetshire, they were defeated with great loss by the famous king Arthur, at the British town of Cair-Badon, near Bath, to which they had laid siege, about A.D. 520. These victories seem to have settled the freedom of the Britons for that time in the West; and they remained for many years afterwards in Somerset, part of Devon, and Cornwall, under their own princes, as well as in Wales. In the North they defended themselves also for a long time in the mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland.

It was not long after the founding of these seven kingdoms, that the Saxon princes began to dispute with each other about the division of the land. Ceaulin, king of the West Saxons, A.D. 560, being at war with all his neighbours, the other Saxon kings made league against him, and appointed ETHELBERT, king of Kent, commander of the joint forces. Ethelbert was an able and moderate prince, who,

after defeating Ceaulin, was honoured by the allies with the title of Bret-walda, or "Lord of Britain." This title was, after his death, enjoyed by other leading princes among the Saxons. It gave him authority to preserve the public peace of the different kingdoms, and to prevent the encroachments of one warlike prince on the territory of another. By his power and prudence the new people were kept from destroying themselves; and his long reign of fifty-six years gave them time to turn their attention to husbandry and peaceful occupations.

At this period GREGORY, surnamed the Great, bishop of Rome, was happily inspired with a zeal for the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. He was of Greek extraction, but born of honourable parents at Rome, where his grandfather Felix had been also bishop; for at this early period it was common for the bishops of Rome to be, like their first apostle St. Peter, married men. Gregory had been a great benefactor to the people of Rome, as governor of the city under the emperor of Greece, before he became a priest. When he determined to leave his civil duties and become a minister of the Church, he gave most of his wealth to build religious houses, and lived himself as a monk in a monastery of his own founding at Rome. He was a man of great piety and learning: but after the inroads of the Goths, almost all Christian learning was mixed with something of superstition. Nor ought this to move our wonder, if we consider how much of lawless violence was then let loose into the world. It was natural that at such times the suffering Christians should have fancied there was something wonderful and divine in what we should now call accidents, when they turned to the preservation of their lives or churches; as when they imagined that angels

came in the form of beggars to ask their alms and warn them of danger in their way, or when the sword or fire suddenly stopped before the threshold of their homes. Nor should we pity these errors of fancy, as if all the advantage was on our side. It is far better for religion, when men live under a constant sense of the truth of things unseen, than when a better knowledge of what are called the powers of nature makes men forget that the hand of God is in all these.

Among other evils of this troubled period, it was a common practice for men to be employed in carrying off and making a traffic of slaves. St. Bavon, a holy man, whose memory is honoured in the Flemish town of Ghent, lived at the same time with Gregory. He is said to have been engaged in his youth in this hateful traffic and when he had begun to lead a life of repentance, he saw one day coming towards him a man whom he had sold. The pangs of remorse, which seized him at the sight, may be imagined. He threw himself at his feet, and cried aloud, "It is I who sold you bound with thongs; remember not, I beseech you, the wrong that I did you; but grant me one prayer. Beat me with rods, and shave my head, as is done to thieves, and cast me bound hand and foot into prison. This is the punishment I deserve; and perhaps, if you will do this, the mercy of God will grant my pardon." Nothing would content Bavon, till the sufferer by his old injustice did as he was desired. The story shews at once the misery of the time, and how the moral power of Christianity struggled in rude breasts for its amendment and alleviation.

Gregory's first emotion of pity to the Saxons was called forth by a sight of like affliction, which indeed no Christian could behold unmoved. A number of

merchants had arrived with a large importation of foreign merchandise; and a crowd of people flocking to the market-place to see what was there for sale, Gregory came among the rest, and saw some boys set forth to be sold as slaves. The fairness of their complexion, handsome form, and flaxen hair, so different from the dark olive hue and jetty locks of the Italians, struck him as remarkable. He inquired from whence they came; and being told from Britain, where the natives were commonly of that complexion, he asked further whether those islanders were Christians or pagans. When he heard that they were pagans, he sighed deeply: "Alas for grief!" he said, "that such bright faces should be under the dominion of the prince of darkness." In answer to his next question, learning that their nation were called Angles, "It is well," said Gregory; "angels they are in countenance, and ought to be co-heirs of angels in heaven." Thus he continued to sport with the names of the province from which they came, and the king in whose territory they were born, Ælla, king of Deorna, or "Deer-land," a name given by the Saxons to the northern part of Yorkshire. It was a kind-hearted mood, which concealed under an innocent jest a more serious feeling; for from that day he determined himself to go on a mission into England. This was some years before his election to the see of Rome; but his character was then so publicly esteemed by his countrymen, that they would not suffer him to quit them. When he became pope (a name given in early times to all bishops, and meaning no more than the common title now given to bishops, of "father in God"), his desire to benefit the Saxons was very soon put into effect. He instructed the agent of his estates in France to redeem the Saxon youths whom he might find in slavery in that country, that

they might be placed in monasteries, and trained in Christian knowledge, to go afterwards as missionaries into their own country. And he sent AUGUSTINE, a Roman monk, at the head of forty missionaries, from his own monastery at Rome, to make his way to Britain. They were on their way detained some time in France, and discouraged by the reports they received of the country. But when Augustine had returned to Gregory, to intreat that he would recall them from this dangerous and doubtful enterprise, he was sent again with letters of encouragement to the party, bidding them to remember, that they could not without loss of credit give up the good work they had begun, and that they should look to the greater glory and crown which would follow the greater difficulty and toil. Thus confirmed, Augustine went forward, and taking with him interpreters from France, landed in the isle of Thanet with his company, in the month of August, A.D. 596.

Ethelbert had received notice of their coming, and was not unwilling to receive them. Indeed, it would seem that the reports were spread by some malicious persons; for there was no ground for the supposed danger. The wife of this "Lord of Britain" was BERTHA, daughter of Charibert, king of the Franks, who were then settled about Paris. She was herself a Christian; and on her marriage it was agreed that she should be allowed to worship God according to the rites of her own religion, and should bring with her a bishop, by name Liudhard, as her instructor in the faith. Queen Bertha accordingly made use of a church, first built by the Romans while they had possession of Britain. This she repaired or rebuilt, and had it dedicated to the honour of St. Martin of Tours, already mentioned, an eminent saint among the Christians of her native

country. A church still stands upon the spot, a piece of elevated ground, a little way out of the city of Canterbury.

[ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, NEAR CANTERBURY.]

When, therefore, the messenger sent by Augustine came to tell the king that these strangers had come from Rome with tidings which concerned his everlasting happiness, he gave orders that they should be entertained in the island of Thanet till he could determine further. A few days afterwards, Ethelbert himself had a meeting with them in the island; but the place he chose was in the open air, as it was a part of the belief of the old Saxons, that if the strangers were wizards or enchanters, they could not hurt a person unless under the same roof with them. Augustine and his company walked in procession to the meeting, chanting the litany, and bearing before them a silver cross and a sacred banner with a

painting of our Saviour. Seats had been prepared for them; and at the command of the king, they preached to him and his nobles the words of life. "They told," says an old Saxon author, "how the mild-hearted Healer of mankind, by his own throes of suffering, set free this guilty middle-earth, and opened to believing men the door of heaven."[3] When they had ended, "These," said Ethelbert, "are fair words, and good promises, that you have brought; but forasmuch as they are new and unknown, we may not yet agree to forsake the ways which we with all the Angles have so long holden. However, as you have come hither from a foreign land, and it seems that you wish to make known to us the things that you believe to be good and true, we will not distress you. We will give you friendly entertainment, and supply you with what you want; and we do not forbid you to convert and bring over to you by your preaching whomsoever you may." He then gave them a dwelling in the city of Canterbury, the chief city of his dominions; and they were there maintained for some time, and had liberty to preach and teach the faith of Christ. It is said, that when they drew near for the first time to the city, going in procession as before with the cross and holy banner, they chanted this prayer: "We pray thee, O Lord, of thy great mercy, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from this city, and from thy

[3] The longer account of this address, given by Mr. Southey, p. 18, from the "Acta Sanctorum," seems to be the invention of a later age. Augustine would not have called Gregory "the father of all Christendom." These assumptions of the popes did not begin till much later. Even Pascal II., A.D. 1100, only claimed to be head of the Church within the borders of Europe. And it is well known that the title of "universal bishop" is one which Gregory did not assume himself, and called it blasphemous for any bishop to assume.

holy house, though we have sinned against thee.[4] Praised be thy name, O Lord!"

The zealous preaching of the monks, with the plain and frugal life they led, was not long without success. Many of the people believed and were baptised, admiring the peaceful manners of the preachers, and the sweetness of their heavenly doctrine. The queen gave them the use of the church of St. Martin's, where they met for prayer and praise, and preached and administered the sacraments, till the king himself becoming a convert, they had a greater liberty, and began to build new churches, or to restore those which had been standing in the British times. The behaviour of Ethelbert throughout was such as to prove his conversion to be sincere. When great numbers, following his example, came to hear the gospel, and join themselves to the Church, he is said to have rejoiced at it; but to have taken care that no man should be driven to embrace Christianity against his will: "only shewing more hearty love to those who believed," says Bede; "as if they were become his fellow-citizens, not only in an earthly, but in an heavenly kingdom." He began at once to provide a certain endowment for the Church, giving a piece of ground for a cathedral church and bishop's residence in Canterbury, and appointing other possessions for it.

When now more than ten thousand of the English had been baptised, within little more than a year after Augustine's arrival, he went in the latter part of A.D. 597 to his friends, Virgil archbishop of Arles, and Etherius, of Lyons in France, to obtain consecration as first bishop of the English Church at Canterbury. In this, and most of the steps he took, he followed the advice of Gregory, to whom the Church of England must always look back as one of

[4] From Dan. ix. 16.

its greatest benefactors. His name has accordingly been preserved, as it well deserves, in the calendar prefixed to our Prayer-book, with that of St. Alban and the old British saints. To his care in preserving the more ancient prayers and sacramental services of the Church, we owe much of the Prayer-book itself, as it now stands; which was not taken from the Mass-book, as the Romanists boast, and Dissenters ignorantly believe, but is in these portions older than the beginning of the corrupt doctrine of the mass. He was, however, so far from obliging Augustine to observe rigidly the service in the form then used at Rome, that he charged him to search diligently if he could find any thing more edifying in other Churches. He mentions particularly the old Church of Gaul, or France, which seems to have been in his mind the same with the old British or Welch Church; and we have seen in the mission of St. Germain how closely these Churches were united. "We are not to love customs," he said, "on account of the places from which they come; but let us love all places where good customs are observed. Choose, therefore, from every Church whatever is pious, religious, and well-ordered; and when you have made a bundle of good rules, leave them for your best legacy to the English."

It is a pity that Augustine's mind was not equally alive to the true catholic spirit of this advice. But man is the creature of habit; and he had been used all his life to the Roman service and customs, so that he gave them a value in some unimportant things, which, it is to be feared, prevented the union of the British and Saxon Christians. All England to the south of the Humber was now at peace, and the authority of Ethelbert reached from Canterbury to Chester and the borders of Wales. Near to the frontiers of the kingdom of Mercia, in this direction,

stood the great monastery of Bangor-Iscoed, already mentioned, the chief nursery of the Church, and home of the priests of North Wales. To this quarter Augustine took a journey, some years after his arrival, having invited the bishops and some of the most eminent teachers of Wales to a conference. They readily came to a meeting with him, at a place called for some time after Augustine's Oak, near the banks of the Severn. It is very likely that they assembled in the open air, under some large tree, as it was long after the custom of the Saxons to hold their meetings for civil purposes, their shire-moots or county meetings, where matters of law and justice were decided, at a wood-side, marked by some great oak-tree. Here were seven Welch bishops, probably from St. David's, Llandaff, Llanbadarn, Bangor, and St. Asaph, with two from Somerset and Cornwall; and their most learned men from Bangor-Iscoed, with Dunod their abbot. To them Augustine, after some length of conference, proposed that, if they would consent to three things, he would give them the right hand of fellowship. "For," said he, "you have many practices which are against the custom of the whole Church, not only that of the Church of Rome. But yet, if you will keep Easter at the proper time; if you will celebrate the rite of baptism as the holy apostolic Church of Rome does; and if you will join with us in preaching the word of God to the Anglo-Saxons, we will bear with all other things."

In explanation of these words, it must be observed, that the British Church at this time kept their Easter-day on a Sunday, from the fourteenth to the twentieth day of the paschal moon inclusive; whereas the Roman Church kept it on the Sunday which fell between the fifteenth and twenty-first. The rule of the Church laid down at the council of

Nice, A.D. 325, mentioned in the preceding chapter, was, that Easter should be kept on the first Sunday after the full moon next following the twenty-first day of March. Some old Churches of the East had kept it on the fourteenth day of the moon, which was the day of the Jews' passover, on whatever day of the week it fell. The Britons seem to have had this custom, which they supposed to be observed in the Churches founded by St. John in Asia; but after the council of Nice, wishing to correct their practice, they had still begun one day too soon. It was no doubt desirable that all the Churches should observe one day. And in the course of time the Welch Christians, by the advice of Elfod, bishop of Bangor, A.D. 755, followed the rule which Augustine now wished to impose on them.

The time which he took, however, to require their conformity was very ill chosen. It was his duty rather to have yielded to them in all things not absolutely necessary to be observed. And his demand respecting the way of administering baptism was still less justifiable. It was indeed a practice which many of the primitive Christians observed, that the infant or adult person should be dipped three times in water, in memory of the Three Persons of the blessed Trinity, or of our Saviour's having been three days in the heart of the earth. But Gregory, writing to Leander, bishop of Seville in Spain at this time, approved of his judgment about this question: "It is true," said he, "we use three immersions at Rome; but in such a matter as this, while the faith of the Church is one, there is no harm in a little difference of custom." Augustine, on the contrary, seems to have thought it a practice handed down from the apostles, which it was not lawful in any degree to change.

Another thing the Britons observed in the beha-

viour of Augustine, which made them less willing to listen favourably to any thing he might say. It is said that, when on their way to the conference, they had turned aside to the cell of a hermit of high character for his piety and wisdom, and had asked him what he would advise them to do. "If Augustine is a man of God," he said, "follow his counsel." "But how," they asked, "shall we have proof of this?" "Our Lord has said," replied the hermit, "'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.' If, therefore, Augustine is meek and lowly, you may believe that he bears the yoke of Christ, and will offer it to you to bear: but if he is ungentle and high-minded, it shews that he is not of God." "And how," they asked again, "shall we discern the one from the other?" "See that he come first with his company to the place of meeting, and when he is seated, make your approach. If he rises before you at your coming, then be sure that he is Christ's servant, and hear his word. But if he despises you, and will not rise, you have the greater number on your side, despise him again." There was a little of Welch blood betrayed in the last part of this advice: and it took effect accordingly. Augustine was seated when they came, and did not rise. They took it as a proof of pride, and said to each other, "If he treats us thus now, what may we expect if we submit to put ourselves under him as our primate?" To his proposals they answered they would not admit them, nor would they esteem him as archbishop. Dunod spoke last: "We are bound to serve the Church of God, and the bishop of Rome, and every godly Christian, as far as helping them in offices of love and charity: this service we are ready to pay; but more than this I do not know to be due to him or any other. We have a primate of our own, who is to oversee us under God, and

to keep us in the way of spiritual life." Augustine shewed something of disappointment at this close of a scheme of union for which he had taken so much pains. "I foresee," he said, "that if you will not have peace with brethren, you will have war with foes; and if you will not preach the way of life to the English, you will suffer deadly vengeance at their hands." Thus they parted; and shortly after Augustine and his friend Gregory died, A.D. 604.

His closing words, however, were remembered as having something prophetic in them, when a few years later, Ethelfrid, a warlike Saxon king of Northumberland, made war upon the Welch. A number of priests and monks from the monastery of Bangor had taken their post on an eminence near the field of battle to pray for the success of their countrymen. The pagan chief observed them, and inquired who they were, and what they were doing. On being told; "Then," said he, "if they are praying to their God against us, though they bear no weapons, they fight against us, and harm us with their curses. Let them be assaulted first." A Welch chief, who had been appointed to defend them, fled at the approach of the Saxons, and the unhappy Christian flock was left to the wolves of war, without means of resistance. Twelve hundred of them are said to have perished, and not more than fifty to have escaped from this cruel slaughter.

Some modern writers, who have noticed these events, have accused Augustine of having stirred up the pagan Saxons against these poor Welch Christians. It is an accusation quite unfounded. Bede tells us that Augustine was dead long before; and if he had been living, he was quite without any means of communication with Ethelfrid, who lived too far north to be under any control from the authority of Ethelbert. The slaughter of the monks

at Bangor, however, did not take place till A.D. 607, or, as some accounts say, A.D. 613.

Augustine's success seems to have made him believe there was some miraculous power displayed in it; as it was the common belief of the Italians long afterwards, that miracles would be shewn to aid the work of missionaries among barbarous nations. On this subject he also received a letter of pious advice from Gregory, not to suffer himself to be uplifted by vain-glory, but to remember our Lord's words to his disciples, "Rejoice not in this, but that your names are written in heaven." He suffered him to turn the temples of Saxon idols into churches, and advised only that the idols should be destroyed, holy water sprinkled about the place, and relics of saints or martyrs placed there. In this there was something of superstition. The practice of the earlier Christians had been, not to make use of heathen temples, but rather to take their halls of justice, or other public buildings, which had not been used for acts of religion. And this was better, as it marked more distinctly the difference between the true faith and the pagan errors; for it would be almost impossible that, while the worship was in the same place, the people's minds should not mix up some remembrance of their old worship. As to the use of relics, it seems to have begun before Gregory's time. When one of their brethren suffered martyrdom, the persecuted Christians used to gather up the ashes from the flames, or the bones which were left by the wild beasts, and to give them Christian burial in churches or churchyards. They remembered how Moses had carefully brought the bones of Joseph out of Egypt to lay them in the sepulchre of his fathers; and they thought it wrong to leave the remains of their dear friends in the hands of unbelievers. This was a true and right

feeling. But it became a superstition, when afterwards these remains were sought for to be placed in other churches, when they were carried in urns and caskets from one country to another, and no place was accounted holy enough which had not some of these relics preserved near the altar. The use of holy water was also superstitious. In early times it was common in the East, and in Africa and other hot countries, to have a large stone basin or fountain of water in the court before the entrance to the church, that the people might, if they pleased, wash off the heat and dust, and refresh their faces, before they went in to worship. Afterwards the priest sprinkled the congregation within the church, as used to be done by heathens in their temples; and it seems that Gregory thought it a ceremony to be used in consecrating the building itself. It may be that he only advised this sprinkling as an outward sign of purification for Christian worship. It was not yet that the holy water was made a kind of charm against diseases, and to drive away evil spirits.

In all other points the counsels of Gregory were praiseworthy. He sent over to Augustine, A.D. 601, a new company of missionaries, among whom were Mellitus, Justus, and Paulinus, all men who laboured zealously in promoting Christianity in England; and with them they brought, besides the relics already mentioned, a number of holy vessels for the sacraments, altar-cloths, and vestments for the priests. What was of still greater value, they brought a manuscript copy of the Bible in two volumes, two copies of the Psalms as they were sung in churches, two copies of the Gospels, a book of Lives of the Apostles and Martyrs, and a Commentary on the Gospels and Epistles. These were perhaps the first written books which made their appearance am

our Saxon forefathers. They also brought to Augustine a pall, a kind of scarf wound round the neck with the end hanging down before; by which Gregory appointed him primate or archbishop of the English Church.

It was the order taken in the ancient Church, after Christianity became settled in the old Roman empire, that the bishops of the capital cities in the provinces were called patriarchs; and they had the right of ordaining archbishops under them, and some authority over all the Church in that province. Thus the bishop of Lyons, the oldest Christian Church in France, the bishop of Milan in the north of Italy, and the bishop of Rome in the south, were patriarchs; as were also the bishops of Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria, in the eastern parts of Christendom. It is also supposed that the bishop of York was patriarch of Britain, while this island was a Roman province. It was therefore an act of Gregory's, by which he claimed to be patriarch of the Anglo-Saxon Church, when he sent Augustine a pall. It was natural that he should claim something of respect and consideration from a Christian community converted by his missionaries; and it was no more than his due. He had no notion that any of his successors would make it a pretence for exacting money from the English, or set their power above the king's. It was his wish to have appointed two other archbishops, of London and of York; and to have sent them palls. His whole scheme was, to have had twelve bishops ordained for south Britain, and twelve for the north, under the archbishop of York; the kingdom of Northumberland at this time, under the warlike Ethelfrid, having been enlarged from the Humber into a great part of the lowlands of Scotland, where most of the country people have ever since been of Saxon race.

These designs, however, were far too great to be carried into effect in the life of Gregory or Augustine. What was now done was the building of the cathedral church of Canterbury, on a site given by Ethelbert, where an old Roman church had once stood. This Augustine dedicated in the name of our blessed Saviour, by the title of Christ's Church. He also built a house for the bishop near it; and a little way out of the city he began to found a monastery for his monks and clergy, and a church belonging to it in honour of St. Peter and St. Paul. This he did not live to finish: it was completed by Laurence, whom he ordained to succeed him as archbishop after his death. He was also enabled, by the bounty of Ethelbert, to found another bishopric at the city of Rochester, and another at London, then the chief city of the little kingdom of Essex, which extended over the county so called and part of Hertfordshire and Middlesex. Sebert, king of Essex, was sister's son to Ethelbert, and was easily persuaded to follow the example of his uncle, and receive Mellitus to preach the Gospel among his subjects. He became accordingly first bishop of the Saxons in London, which was then, as it had been in the time of the Romans, the chief place of resort for foreign merchandise. Rochester was also a Roman town, but had received a new name from the Saxons. Justus was appointed its first bishop. In both these cities, churches were built for the bishops at the expense of king Ethelbert: that in London was called St. Paul's; and that in Rochester, St. Andrew's; by which names the cathedrals, standing on the same ground, are still known. At the same date, king Sebert also founded the ancient abbey of Westminster. The charter or deed, by which king Ethelbert gave a portion of land to the Church of Rochester is preserved to this day. It

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BRITISH ISLES NAZARENE LIBRARY

is remarkable as the oldest deed or legal writing preserved in England; for before the time of Christianity the Saxons had no letters in use, except such as were carved on stones or wooden staves, such as Lapland witches use, and which their wizards and conjurors used as spells and charms.[5]

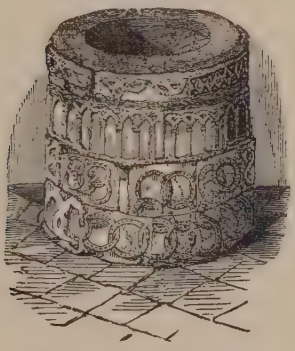
The good king Ethelbert in this charter, dated A.D. 604, shortly after Augustine's death, addresses himself to his son Edbald, who was still a pagan, wishing him a hearty conversion to the catholic faith; and at the end of it pronounces a heavy curse upon those who should hereafter diminish from or hinder the effect of his gift. This was accompanied by a good prayer for those who should increase it; and was probably occasioned by the danger he saw would hang over this newly-founded grant, if his son did not become a Christian.

The first great public benefit which came to the Saxons from Christianity, was a collection of written laws or decrees in their own language, the old English or Saxon tongue, put forth by the authority of Ethelbert, with the advice of his parliament, or council of wise men. These were the earliest English written laws; and were afterwards in part taken by the great king Alfred into the collection of laws which he made for the English people. Ethelbert died in the fifty-seventh year of his long and prosperous reign, A.D. 616. He was buried in St. Martin's porch, where his queen Bertha had been buried, adjoining the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, afterwards called, in honour of the first English arch-

[5] King Alfred, in his version of Bede's History, tells a story of a Christian Saxon taken prisoner by the pagans; whose chains being found loose, the earl whose captive he was asked him "whether he knew the *loosing rhyme*, or had with him the *written stones*, that he could not be bound."—B. iv. c. 22.

bishop, St. Augustine's. There also Augustine and the early Saxon primates were all buried.

Archbishop Laurence, when he had succeeded to Augustine, and completed this church, made another attempt, by sending letters to the Welch bishops, to bring them to an agreement. He sent letters also to the Scottish bishops, the greater part of which nation then inhabited Ireland, whose customs were the same with those of the ancient British Church. But these letters were of no effect; and Laurence, when he had paid the last duties to the remains of Ethelbert, soon found other difficulties to call his attention nearer home.



FONT IN ST. MARTIN'S, CANTERBURY.

CHAPTER III.

CONVERSION OF NORTHUMBRIA.

They listen'd: for unto their ear
The word, which they had long'd to hear,
Had come at last,—the lifeful word,
Which they had often almost heard
In some deep silence of the breast:
For with a sense of dim unrest
That word unborn had often wrought
And struggled in the womb of thought;
And lo! it now was born indeed,—
Here was the answer to their need. R. C. TRENCH.

BY the death of Ethelbert, the newly founded English Church lost its best protector. He left for his successor his son Edbald, a prince who during his father's lifetime had refused to be instructed in the Christian faith, and a widow, a second wife whom he had married after the death of Bertha. This widow Edbald by an incestuous union took to himself. His wild temper in other respects was such as to wear the symptoms of madness. And now all those, whom respect or hope of reward had led to embrace the faith, openly renounced it.

About the same time died Sebert, king of Essex, and left his dominions to three pagan sons. It is said that these barbarian princes, entering the church of St. Paul's while Mellitus was administering the Lord's supper, desired him to give them some of that white bread which he was distributing

to the people. As he knew that they had refused to be baptised, he said, "If you despise the laver of life, you cannot partake of the bread of life." Upon this, complaining of his refusal to oblige them in so small a matter, they told him to quit the country. He left London with his monks and clergy, and came with Justus, who had left Rochester, to a conference with Laurence at Canterbury. It was determined that it was better to go where they could serve God without distraction than to dwell among enemies. Mellitus and Justus crossed over to France, leaving Laurence, who was preparing to follow them in a few days afterwards.

His departure was prevented by a remarkable vision, which appears to have had in it something of a providential character. On the night before the day fixed for his journey, he ordered his pallet-bed to be laid in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, that he might take his last rest in that holy place before he quitted these shores. "He passed," says Alfred, "a long night in prayers, and poured forth many tears, and sent up many a supplication to God for the continuance of the Church, till he was spent and weary, and put his limbs in posture for sleep." In a dream he seemed to see the apostle St. Peter, who sternly reproved him for thinking of flight, when he would leave behind the flock of Christ in the midst of wolves. "Have you forgotten my example," said the vision; "the chains, the stripes, the bonds and afflictions,—nay, the death which I endured for those lambs, whom Christ committed to my care and bade me to feed, as the test by which he would prove my love?" Laurence awoke, and in the pangs of remorse for his weakness afflicted his body with the discipline of the scourge; and thus, under the zeal inspired by what he believed to be a divine warning, came

for the last time to make an appeal to the conscience of Edbald. The earnestness with which he spoke, and the sufferings of mind and body displayed in his appearance, awakened the king's better feelings. As his refusal of Christianity had been from enmity to its moral standard rather than want of conviction of its truth, he was now changed at once; he gave up his idolatry, renounced his unlawful union, and became a baptised Christian. Mellitus and Justus were recalled; and from this time Christianity was fixed in the kingdom of Kent, though some years were to elapse before it could be replaced in London. It is not wonderful, if the simple superstition of the Saxons, or the natural tendency in men "to magnify the mighty things they hear," led them to tell the story of this vision as if the spectre himself had inflicted the scourge on the back of Laurence.

The Bretwalda, or lord of Britain, who succeeded to Ethelbert in the authority conveyed by that title, was Redwald, king of the East Angles. His power was established by a battle in which Ethelfrid of Northumbria was defeated and slain, A.D. 617. Redwald, on a visit which he paid to Ethelbert in Kent, had been persuaded to receive baptism; but on his return home, finding his queen and other counsellors averse to the new faith, he attempted to compromise matters, and had a Christian altar for the holy communion set up in a pagan temple, where other rites of an idolatrous kind were still continued. At this period EDWIN, a Northumbrian prince, flying from the malice of Ethelfrid, his uncle, who had usurped his throne and sought his life, came for refuge to his court. He was courteously received; but it was soon seen that the same irresolute conduct, which shewed itself in the religion of Redwald, endangered also his word of promise to his guest. Ethelfrid sent

messengers more than once, offering a price for Edwin's head, and threatening war if he was still protected. On the arrival of the last of these messengers, Edwin, who had just withdrawn to his chamber for the night, was called out by a trusty friend into the open air, who informed him that the king had promised either to give him up to Ethelfrid's messengers, or to put him to death in his own court. "Now then, if you will be guided by me, I will lead you to a place where neither Redwald nor Ethelfrid shall ever find you." Edwin thanked him for his good will; but weary of his life of danger, he declared his resolution to remain where he was, and rather to abide his death from the king than from any meaner hand.

His friend having left him, Edwin remained alone in the gloom of the night; and sitting on a stone before the palace-door, gave himself up to the uncheerful musings of his situation. Suddenly he saw a figure of a man coming towards him, whose step and stature were unlike any that he knew. While he gazed towards it in some alarm, a strange voice asked him why he sat watching there while others slept. "It matters not," said the unhappy prince, somewhat impatiently; "let it be my choice to watch and pass the night out of doors rather than within." "Do not think," said the stranger, "that I am ignorant of the cause of this lonely watch, or of the evil which you fear. But tell me, what meed would you bestow on him who should set you free from this distress, and assure you that Redwald will neither himself do you any wrong, nor give you up to the foes that seek your life?" "For such a kindness the meed that would be his due would be whatever good I had it in my power to bestow." "But what if you should find him to have truly promised not only this, but that,

after the downfal of your foes, you shall excel in might and rule all the kings that have been before you;—will you hereafter be ready to follow his counsel, if he shall shew you a better rule of life than you or your forefathers have ever known?" Edwin, whose hopes of deliverance rose as this conversation went on, gave a ready promise that he would in all things obey his counsel. With this the stranger laid his hand upon the prince's head, and said, "When this token shall come to you again, remember this time, and the words that have passed between us, and delay not to fulfil your promise." He then disappeared; and Edwin, wondering at the appearance and the message, thought he had seen a spirit. It is most likely that this mysterious person was a Christian, who had accompanied Redwald from Kent; and having become acquainted with his change of purpose, took this way of communicating it to Edwin, in the hope, which was not disappointed, of making it hereafter serviceable to the advancement of the faith among the Saxons in the north.

He had not long departed, when Edwin's friend made his appearance again, and reported that Redwald's queen had turned her husband from his weak and treacherous counsel, and that he was now prepared to defend his cause to the uttermost of his power. The messengers of Ethelfrid had scarcely left his territory, when Redwald assembled his forces, and attacking the fierce pagan before he had time to prepare for his defence, slew him in battle, and delivered his kingdom into the hands of Edwin. The field of this slaughter, in which Regner, son of Redwald, fell, was on the banks of the river Idel in Nottinghamshire.

It was about eight years later, A.D. 625, when, after the death of Redwald, Edwin had succeeded to

his title of lord of Britain, and had by his successes obtained a more ample dominion than any former king, having a realm extending from the northern shore of the Humber far into the lowlands of Scotland, and having added to it the Welch province of Cumberland and the two islands of Man and Mona,[1] —that a distinguished visitor at his court reminded him of this memorable interview. Edwin sought in marriage Ethelburga, daughter of Ethelbert of Kent. Her brother Edbald, at this time turned from his errors, refused to give her to a pagan; till Edwin promised that she, with her household, should enjoy the free exercise of her religion; that he would receive her bishop or other ministers, and would himself become a convert to her creed, "if his wise counsellors found it to be more holy and more pleasing to God than his own." On this answer, it was determined at the Kentish court that PAULINUS should accompany her as domestic chaplain; and as the answer gave the hope that the Northumbrians might through him receive the word of God, he was consecrated as a missionary bishop to Northumbria. Laurence and Mellitus, the second and third archbishops of Canterbury, were now dead; and it was from Justus, who had succeeded Mellitus, that he received consecration.

The men whom Gregory had sent over on his English mission appear to have been men of prudence as well as piety; and this was the character of Paulinus. He was not at first forward in attacking the pagan superstitions, but waited for a favourable time to speak a word for Christianity; contenting himself with a careful regard to the Christian members of the queen's household, and inviting others,

[1] Called from this time Angles-ege, "Angles' Island," or Anglesey.

who might be willing to hear, to attend his preaching. The following year an attempt was made to assassinate Edwin. A messenger from Cwichelm, king of Wessex, arrived at his court with a pretended embassy; and watching his opportunity, while Edwin was giving him an audience, drew a poisoned dagger from his vest and rushed towards the royal seat. The king's life was saved by the self-devotedness of his faithful thane, Lilla, who, having no other means for his defence, presented his own body to receive the murderer's weapon. Such, however, was the force with which it was aimed, that the point reached the king through the body of his slaughtered friend; and it was not till after a severe struggle, in which another of the attendants lost his life, that the assassin was despatched. In the same night, Ethelburga was safely delivered of a daughter, who was named Eanfleda, and lived to be a distinguished patroness of the Northumbrian Christians. When Edwin gave thanks to his gods for her safety, Paulinus offered his thanks to the true Saviour, and ventured to tell the king that it was not to those idols, but to Him to whom his prayers were addressed, that this benefit was owing. The king listened without displeasure, and promised that if he were prospered with life and victory over the prince who had suborned this murderer, he would himself openly choose the service of Christ. In token of the sincerity of his promise, he gave his infant daughter to be baptised by Paulinus, who thus was made the first-fruits of the Northumbrian mission; and with her, eleven members of the royal household were also baptised. The wound which Edwin had received being shortly healed, he marched against the West Saxons, and gave them a great defeat, in which five of their princes are said to have fallen. His power being thus established over the whole country, he returned and held fre-

quent conferences with Paulinus, giving up the idolatry of his fathers, but taking some time to meditate what course he should next pursue. The successors of Gregory, at Rome, were regularly informed, by the missionaries, of the state of things in England; and at this time, pope Boniface took the pains to write letters both to Edwin and Ethelburga, exhorting the king to receive the word that was preached to him, and the queen to use her influence with her husband for his spiritual good. These letters were accompanied with presents; for the king, a soldier's shirt of proof or hauberk ornamented with gold, and a camp-cloak or gabardine of strong and precious cloth; for the queen, an ivory comb set in gold, and a mirror of polished silver.[2] Still Edwin delayed to declare his conversion; he often passed his hours in solitude, and seemed to be in perplexity; sometimes he asked the advice of the nobles of his court, who had the greatest esteem for wisdom; but without coming to any conclusion. Paulinus now suspected that something of kingly pride was struggling in his breast against his better conviction; and seeking him one day as he sat alone, laid his right hand on his head, and asked him whether he remembered that token. The king, startled at the question, was ready to fall at his feet; but Paulinus preventing him, went on: "Behold," he said, "thou hast by God's grace escaped from the hands of the foes whom thou didst dread; and through his bounty thou hast obtained the kingdom thou desiredst: remember now the third thing, the fulfilment of which depends on thine own promise; that he who has raised thee to a short-lived worldly kingdom, and put down thy

[2] An ivory comb of this century, supposed to have been the property of St. Cuthbert, is still to be seen at Durham. The mirrors of this period were commonly of polished steel or some other metal, the art of silvering glass being much more modern.

earthly foes, may deliver thee from eternal woe, and give thee a part of his eternal kingdom in heaven."

The mysterious message thus recalled to mind, —a message which had been so exactly fulfilled, —overpowered the soul of Edwin. He called his friends and counsellers together, that they might deliver their opinions on the new faith proposed for their acceptance, and if they were found to agree with his own, that they might altogether be hallowed at the font of life in the name of Christ. The first to speak was Coifi, the chief priest of the Northumbrians. "It is your part," said he to the king, "to see what is this new doctrine which is preached to us. This at least I know, that there is neither virtue nor profit in what we have hitherto held and taught. If these gods whom we have served were of any power, they would have helped me to honour and advancement from you, rather than others whom you have advanced; since I have served them most. But since they cannot protect their most zealous worshippers, my advice is, that if what is now preached to us stands on better and stronger proofs, let us receive it at once."

Another noble delivered himself in a speech more befitting a consultation on the highest interest of man: "The present life, O king, weighed with the time that is unknown, seems to me like this. When you are sitting at a feast, with your earls and thanes in winter-time, and the fire is lighted, and the hall is warmed, and it rains and snows, and the storm is loud without,—then comes a sparrow and flies through the house. It comes in at one door, and goes out at the other. While it is within, it is not touched by the winter's storm; but it is but for the twinkling of an eye; for from winter it comes, and to winter it soon again returns. So also this life of man endureth for a little space;

what goes before, or what follows after, we know not. Wherefore if this new lore bring any thing more certain or more profitable, it is fit that we should follow it."

Others having spoken to the same purpose, Coifi at length proposed that they should hear Paulinus speak of the God whom he preached to them. His address was such as to move the aged priest to a kind of revenge against his old paganism, in which he had long sought for satisfaction of his doubts in vain. He besought the king that, as it was now determined all should renounce their idol-worship and become Christians, he might be the first to profane the temples. With the king's permission, he mounted the king's own war-horse, girded with a sword, and brandishing a spear; and thus equipped he rode to the sacred enclosure surrounding the temple, which was the highest place of heathen worship in Northumbria. This was at Godmundingham, "the home protected by the gods," now called Godmundham, near Market Weighton, in the East-Riding of Yorkshire. It was unlawful for the Saxon priests to bear arms, or to ride except on a mare; so that the strange appearance of Coifi attracted the notice of the people, who thought that he was seized with madness. Their surprise was still greater, when they saw him hurl his spear and fix it fast in the temple-wall. His followers then quickly set fire to the wooden structure, broke down the fences round, and thus publicly abolished the pagan worship of Northumbria.

King Edwin was baptised at York, on Easter-day, A.D. 627, in a small church built of timber, and dedicated by the name of St. Peter's. From such a humble beginning arose the splendid minster of that ancient city. Here he fixed the seat of a bishopric for Paulinus, and wrote to Honorius, then bishop of

Rome, to obtain for him the honour of a pall. After his baptism he immediately began to erect a church of stone, which was to enclose the wooden walls already erected, and to be itself of larger dimensions; but this was not completed till the reign of Oswald, his successor. The old Saxon kings commonly resided at country villages, where they had their halls or hunting-seats, and changed from one of these residences to another. Edwin had one of these, if not more, in each of the Ridings of Yorkshire, and others farther to the north. Paulinus removed from place to place with the court; at one time preaching and baptising at Yeverin in Glendale, near the river Till in Northumberland, at another at Catterick on the Swale, near Richmond, and another at Donafeld, which is supposed to be near Doncaster. In the first of these places it is said that the number of people who flocked to him was so great, that for six-and-thirty days he was engaged from morning till evening in giving them daily instruction. When they could answer to the catechism he taught, they were baptised in the little river Glen, and in the clear waters of the Swale; "for as yet there were no houses of prayer or baptisteries built," says Bede, "in the first years of the infant Church." However, at Donafeld the king built a second church near his royal hall; but this, together with the mansion, was shortly afterwards destroyed by the pagan Angles of Mercia.

Edwin's zeal did not rest satisfied with the care of his own subjects; he persuaded Eorpwald, son of Redwald, to receive Christianity into East Anglia. This prince being slain in an insurrection of his pagan subjects, his brother Sigebert succeeded to his dominions; and he is said to have been a very zealous promoter of the new doctrine. He had passed some years in France, where he had not only

been instructed in the Christian faith, but had acquired more learning than was common among the Saxon princes. When he came to take the government into his hands, he brought with him Felix, a Burgundian bishop, who was sent, with the consent of Honorius, then the primate, as missionary into East Anglia. There is no part of England into which Christianity was more favourably introduced than this, or where it flourished more in later Saxon times. Here too was the first school founded for the instruction of boys in letters, according to the model of those which king Sigebert had seen in France. It has, indeed, been conjectured, by some who are anxious to prove the antiquity of our universities, that this school was planted at Grantchester, afterwards called Cambridge: but it is more likely that it was at Dunwich, on the Suffolk coast, which was for a long time under the Saxons the see of a bishop, and where Felix resided. The name of this bishop appears to be still preserved by the village of Felixstow, "the dwelling of Felix," on the same coast.

The kingdom of Edwin at this time extended into Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire: and Paulinus crossed the Humber to preach the Gospel at Lincoln. Here his first convert was the reeve, or governor, of the city, a man of wealth named Blecca, who, after he had received baptism with all his family, devoted part of his substance to build a handsome stone church. He also visited the banks of Trent, and baptised near Southwell, where, in Bede's time, about one hundred years afterwards, the tradition of the place preserved some memorial of the personal appearance of this first bishop and missionary of the province of York, of the height of his stature above the middle size, his dark hair, his aquiline nose, and pale and dignified countenance.

At these public baptisms the king was usually present: and from the time of his conversion to the breaking out of the war in which he lost his life, the realms over which he ruled are said to have enjoyed a most prosperous state of peace. And so watchful was he in maintaining justice, that it became a proverb in after-time to describe a good government as like king Edwin's reign, when a mother with a tender infant might have travelled in safety from one sea to the other. It is also recorded, to the praise of his beneficence, that wherever a fountain of clear water welled forth beside the public way, he provided for the refreshment of wayfarers an iron jack or drinking-vessel, fastened to a post set in the ground; and such was the love and fear of his name, that none of his subjects would remove these vessels, or touch them for any purpose but that for which they were designed.

In the rivalry of so many small kingdoms, however, peace was not easily preserved. Penda, a rude pagan warrior, who had succeeded at an advanced age to the throne of Mercia made league with Cadwal, king of Wales, agains Edwin. In a battle fought at Hatfield Chase, near Doncaster, the Northumbrian monarch was defeated and slain; and the country which he had so well governed was laid open to the inroads of two fierce chiefs, who made havoc of all that fell into their hands, sparing neither women nor children. Cadwal was, indeed, a Christian: but his vengeance against the Saxons, whom he naturally considered as foreign invaders, aimed at nothing short of their destruction. In the midst of this confusion and calamity, Paulinus, taking with him Ethelburga, Edwin's widow, with her children, guarded by one of the bravest of the king's thanes, made his way by sea into Kent, where he and they were honourably received by Honorius, whom he

had shortly before consecrated at Lincoln to the see of Canterbury, and by king Edbald. It is a strong proof of the fidelity of his escort of Christian soldiers from Northumberland, that he was enabled not only to preserve his life and the lives of the women and children on this dangerous journey, but even to convey and deposit at Canterbury some precious vessels and ornaments presented by Edwin for the service of his church, particularly a large cross of gold, and a golden chalice for the holy communion. He left behind him in the north his deacon James or Jacob, the companion of his missionary labours, who continued to preach and receive converts by the rite of baptism, residing chiefly at Akeburgh, "Jacob's Town," near Richmond; and who afterwards, when peace was restored, taught the Christians at York the use of chanting, as it was already practised at Canterbury, in the manner which Augustine had learnt at Rome. Paulinus did not himself return any more to York; but the see of Rochester being then without a bishop, he was invited by Edbald and Honorius to that charge, in which he died at a good old age about ten years afterwards.

The death of Edwin took place on the twelfth of October, A.D. 633, six years and a half from the date of his baptism, in the forty-ninth year of his age, and the eighteenth of his reign. His name, which has passed, like that of Oswald, Alfred, and Edward, his successors as Christian princes and defenders of the faith, into a common English Christian name, is a memorial of the veneration paid to his memory by our forefathers. A faithful retainer carried his head from the field of battle to York, where it was honourably buried in a porch of St. Peter's Church, called St. Gregory's porch, after the good pope from whose disciples he had received the word

of life. His widow Ethelburga retired from the world into the monastery of Liming in Kent, founded for her by her brother Edbald, where her holy and exemplary life caused her to be revered as a saint after her death, in A.D. 647.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE DEATH OF KING EDWIN TO THE DEATH OF ARCHBISHOP THEODORE. ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY.

> I like a blunt indifference;
> Affections which, if put to proof, are kind;
> And piety tow'rds God. Such men of old
> Were England's native growth.
>
> WORDSWORTH.

E have thus far seen the work of the Gospel among our Saxon forefathers done only by the Italian missionaries, and a few fellow-labourers from the shores of France. But we shall now see how the truth, taught by the ancient Britons to the wild nations of Ireland and Scotland, came back to enlighten the country from which it had at first been spread. The sons of king Ethelfrid, after Edwin had succeeded to his throne, had taken refuge among the Picts and Scots, with a large body of young nobility attached to their party. Here the disciples of Columba, from Iona, had taught them the Christian faith, and they had been baptised. After the fall of Edwin, one of whose sons by a former wife had fallen by his father's side, and the other was a prisoner in the hands of Penda,—Ethelburga having carried his children of the second marriage into Kent,—there were none of his line left to dispute the succession with them. Accordingly they returned; and Eanfrid, the eldest, took

possession of Northumberland and Durham, called by the Saxons Beorna-ric, or "Bear-land," either from the fierce creatures which then infested it, or because it was by the name of "bears" that the old pagans of the North distinguished their bravest warriors.[1] A nephew of Edwin's, by name Osric, was at the same time set up by the Saxons of Yorkshire to be king of "Deer-land."[2] The choice was unhappy. Osric, who had received baptism from the hands of Paulinus, no sooner was declared king, than he renounced the Christian faith; and then marching to York, which had surrendered to Cadwal, attempted to besiege him there. The Welch chieftain, seeing him ill provided for the attack, sallied out and destroyed him and his forces; and after long harassing the province, contrived to slay Eanfrid also, who had likewise become an apostate, at a conference. Oswald, the second son of Ethelfrid, was at hand with a small but resolute band of followers; and by a victory near Hexham entirely changed the fortunes of the contending parties. Cadwal and his large host were left in heaps of slaughter on the field; and thus ended a war, in which the Britons seemed for a short time likely to regain their old possessions, but which was disgraced by too much cruelty to be crowned with lasting success.

There is no Saxon king whose name has been more honoured in old traditions than that of Oswald, whom this victory raised at once to the throne of Northumbria, and to the title of "Lord of

[1] To be called a *bear* in these degenerate days is not considered a compliment; but in old times, in the North, as the bear was the strongest animal known, it was as high a title to be called Beorn-mod, or Beorn-red, 'bear-hearted,' as to have the surname of William the Lion, or Richard Cœur-de-Lion.

[2] See above, p. 28.

Britain," and all the power of Edwin. It is said, that before he led his men to this dangerous onset, he planted an ensign of the cross in front of their ranks, and kneeling with them before it, prayed for deliverance and victory. "This sign of the holy rood," he said, "is our token of blessing; at this rood let us bow, not to the tree, but to the almighty Lord that hung upon the rood for us, and pray him to defend the right." When he was established in the kingdom, he sent ambassadors to the Scottish princes, with whom he and his thanes had found refuge, and prayed them to send him some bishop, from whom the English people might receive the precepts of the faith which he had learnt among them. They sent him without delay a man of great gentleness and piety, as Alfred describes him, full of zeal and of the love of God. This was AIDAN, to whom, at his own choice, Oswald gave for his see the island of Lindisfarne, on the coast of Northumberland, near to Bambrough, his own royal seat, A.D. 635. This was the first foundation of the bishopric of Durham.

Aidan was a monk of Iona, the monastery of St. Columba before mentioned,[3] which in this century had sent forth many missionaries, who had founded other monasteries in the north of Scotland, and was the chief seat of dignity in the Scottish Church. After he had come to Lindisfarne, many other Scottish monks and priests came to associate themselves with him. They followed the Welch or ancient British way of calculating Easter, which afterwards led to some inconvenience with those who had been taught the Roman calendar; but nothing could be more exemplary than the life and behaviour of these northern churchmen. Aidan himself was a pattern

[3] Ch i. p. 20.

of that frugal and self-denying life, of which his countrymen in later times have shewn so many praiseworthy examples. "He was one," says Bede, "who seemed neither to covet nor love any of this world's goods: and all the gifts he received from princes or rich men, he distributed in alms to the poor. Wherever he went, whether to town or village, he went on foot, never riding on horseback, unless some urgent need required it, and inquiring of rich and poor whom he met whether they were Christians; if they were not, he invited them to learn the faith; if they were, he sought by discourse to establish them in what they had learnt, and by words and deeds to encourage them in works of mercy. His attendants, clergy or laymen, wherever he journeyed, were seen employed either in reading the Scriptures or in learning psalmody, whenever they were not engaged in holy prayers. If ever he was invited to the king's table, he went with one or two of his priests; and when he was refreshed, he soon rose and took his leave to return to read or pray. By his example, the religious men and women were taught to observe the fasts of Wednesday and Friday, abstaining from food till the ninth hour of the day; and this they did throughout the year, except from Easter to Whitsunday. To the rich and powerful he gave his reproofs without fear or favour; offering them no fee or present, but entertaining them when they visited his house with hospitable cheer. Besides the bounty which he shewed to the poor out of the worldly goods which were presented to him, he employed a great portion of them in redeeming those who had been unjustly sold for slaves; and many of those whom he had thus redeemed, he afterwards made disciples in the faith; and when they were well instructed, promoted them to the sacred order of priesthood."

We may see in this character a pleasing picture of the life of a good Christian bishop in those simple times, and the social evils which it was part of his task to remedy. In those days, the governors seem to have expected bribes from the people; in ours, the people elect their governors and receive bribes from them. It may be doubted whether this old Christian bishop would have approved of either practice; and surely no reform will be complete till it provides against both; but this, it must be feared, is beyond the power of law, and only Gospel can do it. Of the amendments which Christianity brought into the world, none is more remarkable than the relief which it has ever sought to administer to the unhappy condition of slavery. In this part of his works of mercy, Aidan had many imitators in the teachers of the Church in later Saxon times.

It is said, that when Oswald first sent to Iona for a Christian guide, there was sent before Aidan a man of sterner mood, who, not being well received by the Northumbrians, returned to his countrymen with many complaints against the untamed and harsh nature of the people. "You seem to me," said Aidan, "to have been too hard with these unlearned hearers. Remember the apostle's practice, to feed them first with the milk of gentler doctrine, till they are prepared for that which is more perfect." The remark appeared to the council of Scottish Churchmen so discreet, that they unanimously chose Aidan for the mission which he so meritoriously discharged. It appears, that when he first came to Lindisfarne, he was too little acquainted with the Saxon language to preach to the natives in their own tongue; and that Oswald, who in his years of banishment had become master of the Scottish or Gaelic language, was often seen acting as his interpreter, while he preached to his earls and thanes. "It was a fair

sight," says Bede, "to see a Christian king so employed;" and a striking instance of the care of Providence, turning the misfortunes of his youth to a means of blessing.

Oswald married the daughter of Cynegil, or Kingil, king of Wessex; at whose court when he was received as a suitor, he found there Birinus, a new Italian missionary, sent from Genoa under a promise which he had made to Pope Honorius, to preach to the pagan provinces of England. Kingil and his people had listened favourably to his message, and they were now many of them prepared to receive baptism, when Oswald came and stood godfather to his future father-in-law. The Italian bishop, who had received consecration in his own country, was then placed by the two kings at Dorchester near Oxford, A.D. 635. From this see, a few years afterwards, arose the bishopric of Winchester; and other sees at Leicester and Sidnacester probably now called Stow, which, after the Norman conquest, were removed to Lincoln. Thus the kingdom of the West Saxons, one of the most extensive and well-peopled, became converted to Christianity.

The Scottish bishops of Lindisfarne, however, seem to have taken the steps that most effectually led to the establishment of Christianity in the hearts of the people. The Italian missionaries do not appear to have ordained many of the native Saxons to the ministry, though they had now been nearly forty years settled in Kent; and in the reign of Erconbert, son of Edbald, A.D. 640, the old idol-gods were everywhere destroyed. The first five archbishops of Canterbury were all Italians; and Honorius the last, dying in A.D. 656, left the see vacant, without having named, as his predecessors had done, the person who was to succeed him. Then, after a vacancy of a year and a half, Frithona, a West

Saxon priest, was consecrated by Ithamar, bishop of Rochester; but the name sounding barbarous in Roman ears, the monks of Canterbury changed it to Deusdedit, or "God's gift," names of like meaning being often taken by Christians at their baptism in the primitive Church. It is true that archbishop Honorius had in his lifetime consecrated this same Ithamar, a native of Kent, to succeed Paulinus at Rochester; and Thomas, a man of the fen-country, and Boniface of Kent, to succeed Felix at Dunwich: but the two scriptural names given to the first two, and the Italian name of the last, whose Saxon appellation was Bertgils, proves something of unwillingness to turn the Roman plantation into an English Church. The Scottish Churchmen, on the contrary, being less anxious to prolong their own mission than to make Christians of the Saxons, began very soon to associate natives of the country with them in their labours; and did not make a point of turning their converts into Scotchmen. When Peada, son of Penda, invited them into Mercia, A.D. 653, they sent for the first bishop one of their own countrymen, Dwina or Duma, accompanied by three Saxon priests. The see of Duma was probably at Repton, in Derbyshire; but it was shortly afterwards removed to Lichfield, where his successors have continued till this time. One of these Saxon priests, Cedda, was afterwards consecrated by Finan, second bishop of Lindisfarne, to restore Christianity in Essex. London was at this time in the hands of the Mercians; so that the king of Essex could not restore him the see of Mellitus at St. Paul's, but gave him two other seats in the present county of Essex; Tilbury on the Thames, and Ithancester, a town which stood near Maldon, but has since been destroyed. Thus the whole of England, with the exception of Sussex, had received the preachers of

the Gospel within fifty-five years after the landing of Augustine; but its rapid progress in the latter portion of this period was especially owing to the disciples of Columba, whom the zeal of Oswald had brought to Lindisfarne.

In the mean time the wars and troubles of the little Saxon kingdoms were often a hinderance to the progress of the faith. The fierce old Penda, ill brooking his subjection to Northumbria, renewed the war against Oswald, who fell in a battle against him in the ninth year of his reign, A.D. 643. Sigebert of East Anglia, and his successor Anna, both recorded as excellent Christian princes, were also slain by Penda in two different wars, at some interval of time from each other. Another Sigebert, surnamed the Good, who had called Cedda from Lastingham to restore Christianity in Essex, met with his death from two of his own relatives, in a manner which strongly marks the struggle which was made between Christianity and the old paganism. The two brothers who had done the murder, on being brought to trial, and questioned why they did it, could only say that they were provoked because the king was so ready to spare his foes, and so mildly granted forgiveness to all that asked it. The Christian spirit of King Oswald, which had shone so eminently in his life, did not desert him in the hour of death. When he saw himself surrounded by the enemy, and was on the point of receiving his death-wound, he looked upwards; and those who were near him, and lived to tell of that disastrous day, reported that the last words on his lips were, "Spare, Lord, the souls of my people."

Oswy, brother of Oswald, obtained the Northumbrian throne after the battle in which Oswald fell; but he was for some time master of only part of the province, another competitor keeping a part, and

was also for his first years subject to the authority of Penda. That warlike pagan being at length slain in a bloody conflict near the river Aire, Oswy became for the remaining years of his reign undisputed "lord of Britain." At the close of it, the arrival of THEODORE of Tarsus to be archbishop of Canterbury, A.D. 669, brought further eminent benefits to the English Church.

On the death of Frithona, three years before, Oswy, and Egbert then king of Kent, had sent a Kentish priest named Wighard to be consecrated archbishop at Rome by Vitalian, the pope of that period. Wighard died at Rome before he could be consecrated; upon which news being received, they sent a second message to Vitalian, desiring that he would himself find some good religious man, worthy of the office, and they would receive him for primate. It was some time before the good pope, who was anxious to do his duty to the Saxons, was able to meet with such a character as he thought fit for the station.[4] He had no one at Rome, or of Italian

[4] Vitalian, in his letter to king Oswy, preserved in Bede's History (iii. 29), has these words: "A man of good instruction, and in all things well accomplished for archbishop, *such as your letter asks for*, I have not yet been able to find; for the person to whom I have sent resides at some distance." It appears from this, that the king had requested this pope to send the Saxons an archbishop appointed by himself. When some modern writers therefore say, that this was done with "Italian subtlety," and that the pope made an experiment on English patience, they mistake the fact. If the English had been unwilling to receive a primate from Rome, there was plenty of time, after they had heard of Wighard's death, to send another of their native priests to be consecrated by the pope. When *Italian subtlety* filled the vacant preferments in England, in the time of king John and Henry III., they were not left open for two or three years before an appointment was made. Hence Malmsbury (b. i. c. 50) says, that "to king Oswy belongs the principal honour of having procured the mission of Theodore, though Egbert shared in the act as prince

birth, whom he could fix upon; but at a monastery near Naples there resided a reverend abbot born of African parents, named ADRIAN, famous for his knowledge of the Scriptures, and very learned in the Greek and Latin languages. Adrian was sent for, but modestly declined the office; and a friend whom he recommended to the pope also declined, his health being too infirm. In the midst of their difficulties, Theodore happened to visit Rome, and as he was well known to Adrian, Vitalian made choice of him for the see of Canterbury. He was at this time sixty-six years of age, but a firm and vigorous old man, having lived the temperate life of a monk in his native country. And he lived twenty-two years more as archbishop, devoting all his powers of mind and body to the good of his adopted country.

As he was by education a member of the Greek Church, which after the division of the Roman empire soon began to vary in some of its practices from the Western Church, Vitalian thought it right to guard against the risk of his introducing any of these practices among the Saxons. For this reason he required that Adrian should accompany him to England. In all other respects, nothing could be more truly catholic than the spirit of this mission. Here were three churchmen, born in three distant countries, Africa, Greece, and Italy, all led by one wish to benefit a fourth, to serve the cause of the Gospel in England; and for this sacred purpose two of them at once renounced the ties of country, kindred, and friends, to go among strangers, and one at that advanced age when nature commonly asks only for rest and repose. Their journey to England was

of the province of Canterbury." He says not a word of Vitalian as acting beyond their wishes, not even mentioning his name.

not without inconvenience and delay. A powerful minister at the French court, suspecting that they came with a message from the Grecian emperor against his master to the English kings, kept them prisoners at large for several months at Paris; and it was not till the king of Kent had sent his reeve or ambassador into France, that Theodore was allowed to proceed, Adrian being still detained a short time longer.

They found the newly-planted Church labouring under something of division. Oswy had married Eanfleda, the daughter of Edwin and Ethelburga,[5] who, having been educated in Kent, had learnt to prefer the Roman way of calculating Easter. Hence when she came, with her Kentish chaplain, to Bambrough, it happened that one part of the household were keeping the Lent fast, while the others were rejoicing in the Easter festival. This led to disputes between those of the clergy who had been ordained by the Scots, and the disciples of Augustine and Paulinus; and a few years before the arrival of Theodore, a famous council was held on this question at the abbey of Whitby, A.D. 664. Agilbert, a French prelate, who had resided some time in Ireland, and was now bishop of Dorchester, was the leader of one party; and Colman, third bishop of Lindisfarne, was chief speaker for the other. Agilbert, however, who was not master of the Saxon language, and shortly afterwards retired to France, where he died archbishop of Paris, took little part in the debate; but deputed Wilfrid, a young Northumbrian priest, who had passed some years in study at Rome and Lyons, to plead for the rule of Italy and France. Oswy, who presided at this council, after listening in turn to Colman and Wilfrid, one of whom

[5] See above, p. 50.

traced his practice to St. John, the other to St. Peter, on hearing the text, "Thou art Peter, and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," stopped the debate. "Is it true, Colman," he said, "that our Lord spoke these words to Peter?" "Most true." "But can you prove that any such power was given to your saint Columba?" "We cannot." "Then," said the king, "I dare not withstand this door-keeper of heaven, but must obey his rule, lest, when I come to that door, and ask for entrance, he should refuse to turn the key." This kingly jest was received as the jests of great men usually are by their dependants, and the assembly of earls and commoners decided that it would be expedient to leave the erroneous calculation and adopt the better. It is most likely that the influence of Queen Eanfleda had before persuaded Oswy to take the part he did; for it is impossible to suppose that he could have been seriously turned to a new opinion in the debate by such an argument as this. It was unfortunate in its result, however, as it gave offence to Colman, a plain sincere Christian, who shortly after resigned his bishopric, and retired to a monastery in Ireland, taking with him several Saxon religious persons, as well as the greater part of his Scottish monks and clergy. The Scottish Church afterwards reformed their calendar, A.D. 710.

It is much to be regretted that this difference could not have been left to time and friendly intercourse on both sides; in which case it is probable that the change, which both the Scottish and Welch Churches afterwards admitted, would have been made in concert with the English. As it was, the Northumbrians lost a body of Christian teachers, whose sojourn had been of the greatest benefit to them, and whose life and manners were above all praise. Their frugal habits and abstinence from

all worldly indulgences were attested by the condition in which they left the place, to which their abode had gained the title of the Holy Island Besides the humble church of wood, cased with lead, both walls and roof, there were only a few of the most simple dwellings in which civilised man can live. Money they had none: their only riches were their flocks and herds. All that they had they gave to the poor; and if the king came to visit them, or to pray in their church, he either departed as he came, with a few attendants, or received from them no better entertainment than their daily fare. It is no wonder that the influence of such men in promoting Christianity was very great: the people flocked to the churches and monasteries on Sundays to hear their preaching; and if one of them came to a village as he journeyed, they would crowd round him to ask for an exhortation from the words of life. Even on the way, the peasants who met them would run up, and ask them to sign their foreheads with the cross, and to give them their blessing. And indeed, says Bede, they had no other errand wherever they went, than to preach, to baptise, to visit the sick, and to take care of souls.

The first year of Theodore's primacy was employed in visiting all the places in England where there was any religious foundation standing, whether bishops' sees or monasteries, and setting in order what was wanting. Before the time of Theodore there seem to have been no parish churches or residences of single clergymen; but whether married priests or monks, they dwelt together near the bishop's see, or where a monastery was founded. Theodore was received every where with a hearty welcome; and under his instructions the right way of keeping Easter was soon received in all the English

Church. Both he and his companion Adrian were well instructed in sacred and other learning; and finding the Saxons as yet very little acquainted with letters, it was one of their first labours to found schools, where the Greek and Latin language could be taught, together with arithmetic, some knowledge of astronomy for the calculation of time, and rules for making verses. From this time also the use of chanting was taught in all the churches; and Theodore was himself perhaps the first who practised the art of medicine in England. He seems to have obtained grants of land from some of the Saxon princes at Cricklade in Wiltshire, and at Oxford, where his first schools were established; but the monastery of St. Peter's, or St. Augustine's, at Canterbury, where Adrian presided as abbot, was for some time after the most distinguished seat of learning in the south of England. There were many of their disciples, as Bede testifies, in his time, who knew Latin and Greek as well as they knew their own tongue. For the advancement of learning, Theodore had brought a number of manuscripts with him, and procured others from Rome or from the East. Among these are said to have been copies of the poems of Homer, the writings of Chrysostom and Josephus, besides several portions of the Scriptures. Nothing can prove more remarkably the effect of his diligence in training the minds of the young Saxons, than the change which it wrought in the state of society. And it was so ordered by a good Providence, that the greater part of the Saxon kingdoms at this time, and for some years later, enjoyed an interval of peace, without the interruptions of continued war. "The kings were brave and Christian," says Bede, ready to defend their own rights, and not invading the provinces of each other. Their number, moreover, was by this time some-

thing lessened. Wulfhere, king of Mercia, had become master of Essex, and the kings of East Anglia were subject to him. Cedwalla, king of Wessex, A.D. 685, conquered the little province of Sussex; so that there remained only the two kingdoms of Kent and Wessex south of Thames. And Northumbria had already obtained something of firmness and security, which, with little interruption from the Picts and Scots, it continued to enjoy.

Theodore was received as primate of all England, to the north as well as to the south of the Humber. There had been a pall sent from Rome to Paulinus, to give him the honour of archbishop of York; but the death of Edwin, and his flight from the province, took place before he had received it. The see remained vacant for thirty years, while the Scottish bishops of Lindisfarne governed the Church of Northumbria; and at the time of Theodore's arrival there was some dispute about it. Wilfrid, abbot of Ripon, the Northumbrian priest who had taken so prominent a part in the council at Whitby, had been appointed shortly after to the bishopric of York; and as there was then no archbishop at Canterbury, and Rochester was also vacant, he would not receive consecration from the Scottish bishops of Lindisfarne or Lichfield, but went over to France to obtain it from Agilbert at Paris, and from other French bishops. King Oswy, not altogether approving the slight which was thus put upon the Church from which he had himself received his first Christian instruction, sent for a worthy Saxon abbot from the monastery of Lastingham in Cleveland, to have him made bishop. This was ST. CHAD, the Saxon saint, whose memory is duly honoured by the beautiful cathedral church at Lichfield, dedicated to his memory; honoured also it is by a church called after him at Shrewsbury, though not of the propor-

tions or style of that in which he used to worship.[6] He went for consecration to Wina, bishop of Wessex, for whom king Coinwalch, or Kenwal, had just built the cathedral church of Winchester, founded A.D. 660. On this occasion we find the first act of communion between the Welch and English Christians; two Welch bishops having come, probably from Cornwall and Somerset, to assist Wina at the consecration of Chad. It is not, however, to be wondered at, if these old inhabitants of Britain continued still unwilling to join in Christian fellowship with the people who had driven them out of the best and fairest portion of the island, and with whom their own independent spirit still kept them at frequent war; especially when these new converts to the faith, instead of coming to them for instruction, accused them of errors in their practice, and wanted them to conform to ordinances of their own.

Chad, being thus consecrated bishop of York, shewed himself in all things a pupil of the good Scottish bishop Aidan, living in the most self-denying manner, and journeying about on foot to preach at cot or castle, villages or towns. Wilfrid, finding his see occupied by another, made no complaint; but staying in Kent, where there was then no bishop, continued to ordain priests and to exercise the acts of his function there, till Theodore came. It seems

[6] St. Chad's at Shrewsbury was an abbey church founded by the Mercian princes, soon after the death of this good bishop, when they had taken Shrewsbury from the Welch. But the present parish church, in which there is a jumbling mixture of Doric, Ionic, Rustic, and Corinthian, built about fifty years ago, with its large round body and small head, has been compared to an overgrown spider. *Quarterly Review*, No. cxxvi. p. 410.—The beautiful old Saxon church at Lastingham, as Mr. Stevenson has well observed, if not the original building of Cedda or his brother Chad, is one of the oldest churches in the kingdom. Stevenson's *Bede*, p. 212.

that Theodore had no intention to interfere with Chad as an intruder, for he considered that the king had a right to dispose of the bishopric; but he had some doubts whether the consecration of the British bishops was according to order. "If you doubt it," said Chad, "I willingly resign my bishopric. I ever thought myself unworthy of the dignity, but consented to take it out of obedience to my king." Theodore replied, that he by no means wished him to resign his bishopric; but if he had not been duly consecrated, he was himself ready to complete his consecration. This he did; but Chad, probably seeing that there was a division of parties in the province, withdrew to his humble retirement at Lastingham; and Wilfrid entered upon the duties of the see. Theodore, struck by the worth of this primitive-mannered Christian, when the see of Lichfield shortly after became vacant, recommended Chad to Wulfhere, king of Mercia. He had now a province not much less in extent than the Northumbrian kingdom, having all the counties which compose the midland circuit, and Staffordshire, with part of Shropshire and Cheshire, beside. Theodore, therefore, at another meeting, having for some time in vain entreated him to use a horse for more expedition on his journeys, at length ordered one of his own horses to be brought, and insisted upon mounting him himself. The archbishop is said also to have made him promise to have with him in case of need a *horse-waggon*, or jaunting-car; which was probably the kind of carriage then used by persons of quality on peaceful travels.

Thus provided, the good old Saxon journeyed diligently about the midland counties, and in a few years gained a high reputation for his Christian virtues. Wulfhere gave him a grant of land in Lincolnshire, on which he founded a monastery, which

is supposed to have stood at Barton upon Humber, where there is still standing a very ancient Saxon church. He died in March, A.D. 672, within three years after he had been appointed to the see of Lichfield; at which city he resided with seven or eight of his clergy in a private house, employing himself with them, whenever he was not visiting his diocese, in study and prayer. It is recorded of him, that he was deeply moved to adore the power of God in the mysterious wonders of the wind and storm. If he heard the sound of it, as he sat reading, he would stop to utter a prayer that God would be merciful to the children of men. As it increased, he would shut the book, and, falling on his knees, remain fixed in inward prayer. But if it grew very violent, or thunder and lightning shook the earth and air, then he would go to the church, and pass the time in earnest supplications and psalms. "Have you not read," he would say, "how it is written, 'The Lord thundered out of heaven, and the Highest uttered his voice?' God moves the clouds, wakens the winds, shoots forth the lightning, and thunders from heaven, that He may arouse the dwellers upon earth to dread Him, and put into their hearts the remembrance of the doom that is to come, to bend their haughty boldness, and drive away their pride. Therefore it is our part to answer his heavenly warning with due fear and love, to implore his mercy, and examine the secrets of our hearts; that we may not be stricken by his hand when it is stretched forth to judge the world."[7]

Wilfrid, his successor at York, was a person of very different character, much superior to Chad in learning and accomplishments, and more disposed to

[7] This pious custom of St. Chad is dwelt upon at some length by the excellent Bishop Jeremy Taylor, *Life of Christ*, Disc xviii.

advance the cause of the Church by outward state and wealth. He was born of noble parentage, and in early youth had been sent by his father to try his fortune at court. "He went," says the friend who wrote his life, "with arms, and horses, and good apparel for himself and his attendants, that he might be fit to stand before a king." Queen Eanfleda became his patroness, and from her advice he seems to have determined to enter upon a religious life. He retired from Bambrough to Lindisfarne with one of the king's thanes, whose infirm health had inspired him with a wish to pass the end of his days in that monastery. There he lived some time under the discipline of the Scottish monks; but his active mind was not satisfied with their simple rules. He went to ask the queen's leave to pay a visit to Rome. It was easily granted; the more so, as she was herself educated under the discipline of the Roman missionaries in Kent; to whom, and to the king, she instructed him to go, with a letter of introduction, on his way. He was well received at Canterbury, where he made acquaintance with Benedict Biscop, another youth of promising talents, who accompanied him abroad. There, both at Lyons and at Rome, he saw something of the pomp and state of the Church in foreign lands, and after passing some years in study at both places, he returned to England, and became abbot of a monastery at Ripon, till those events occurred in his life which have been already mentioned.

He was only thirty years of age when he went over to France to be consecrated bishop of York; and it was now five years later when he took possession of the Northumbrian province. He found the church built by Edwin and Oswald in a state of miserable neglect, the old roof dropping with rain-drops, and the windows open to the weather, and giving entrance to the birds, which made their nests within.

He repaired it substantially, "skilfully roofing it with lead," (it was probably of thatch before), "and prevented the entrance of birds and rain by putting glass into the windows, yet *such glass as allowed the light to shine within.* At Ripon he built a new church *of polished stone*, with columns variously ornamented, and porches."[8] It was, perhaps, in bad imitation of the marble buildings he had seen in Italy, that he washed the outer walls of this original York minster, "and made them, as the prophet says, *whiter than snow.*" And it was a piece of splendour, very strikingly in contrast with the plain manners of good St. Chad and his Scottish instructors, when he made a great feast of three days to king Egfrid and his brother, his reeves and thanes, and all the abbots and other persons of dignity, whom he could muster in the Northern kingdom, at the dedication of this first minster of Ripon. This custom, however, of exhausting a good portion of the Church's wealth at dedication-feasts, which prevailed both in Saxon and Norman times, was not without a munificent

[8] This is the account of Stephen Eddy, the writer of Wilfrid's life, a writer older than Bede, who tells us that he was a Kentish man, and precentor, or teacher of chanting, under Wilfrid, at York or Ripon, A.D. 670. It is extraordinary that many modern writers should speak of the Saxons before the Conquest as having only wooden churches, when there is in this oldest piece of Saxon history such an account as may be found in the text. The glass which the Saxons had then learnt to fuse was not quite of such fine transparency as may now be seen in the large plates of every haberdasher's window; but probably something more thick and green than is still to be found in old country churches, where it has stood for many centuries. Still it was good enough to keep out wind and weather, and *it was their best.* And if it cast "a dim religious light" through the interior, they did not want those ugly green or red curtains, which are needed in modern temples, to shut out the violence of the summer sun.—Since this note was first written, a manufactory of glass adapted for church-windows has been founded at Newcastle.

kind of charity; and it was founded on the example of Solomon at the dedication of his temple.

It must be observed, that in these early times, before the division of the country into parishes, almost all the income of the church was paid to the bishop. The tithes were sent by Christian landowners to the bishop's see, which were before paid to the heathen priest; for this religious offering, which was paid by the patriarchs before the law,[9] was never lost in the heathen world before the times of Christianity. Besides these, we find before Bede's time there was established in Northumberland and Wessex a payment called *church-scot*, or first-fruits, to be paid at Martinmas; which was probably applied to building or repairing of churches, as the name seems to imply, and has been supposed to be the origin of modern church-rates. The bishop therefore travelled about in those times, wherever he went taking with him not only his chaplains and clergy, who taught chanting and psalm-singing, but a company of builders and stone-masons, plumbers and glaziers, and carpenters, to build churches and baptisteries about the country, in places where the noblemen and country gentlemen (earls and thanes) gave them ground for building. There were many places where the ancient British clergy had held churches, which were now deserted. It was the aim of Wilfrid to recover these for holy uses; and in many instances his labours were crowned with success.

As this account of the dedication of Ripon is the earliest account of the kind which is left to us of the dedication of an English church, it may be well to give it a little more at length. On the assembly of

[9] Gen. xiv. 20; xxviii. 22.

princes and people coming together, Wilfrid, or one of his priests, appears to have offered a prayer taken from the prayer of Solomon (1 Kings viii.), to consecrate the house of God and the prayers of the people in it. They then dedicated the altar, which was raised on steps, and laid over it a purple covering embroidered with gold; the sacred vessels were then placed on it, and all the congregation partook of the holy communion. Then the bishop, standing in front of the altar, delivered a sermon, turning towards the people, and enumerated in it all the gifts of land which the princes of Northumberland had given to the minster of Ripon; and exhorting them to go on in such good works, made mention of the old British churches, which were still lying waste about the country where they dwelt. Among the other precious gifts presented by Wilfrid on this occasion, was "a wonderful piece of workmanship unheard of before his time." This was a copy of the four Gospels, written with gilded letters, on parchment, adorned with purple and other colours, the cover of which was inlaid with gold and precious stones, "the work of jewellers." After the service was concluded, the festivities began; and the princes and nobles were as affable and courteous among the monks of Ripon as the occasion demanded.

The reign of Egfrid, son of Oswy, was as prosperous at the outset as his father's had been; and for some time Wilfrid and his sovereign were the best of friends. But the zeal of the Northumbrians to enrich the Church, and the many monasteries which they founded in that wide province, was now such as to awaken some alarm and jealousy in the breast of the king. The abbots and abbesses of these monasteries, who were of the best blood in

Northumberland, often made presents to Wilfrid of their wealth, or left him heir of their possessions; and thus the king's heriots[10] and other revenues were impaired. Many persons seem to have kept their money back in their life-time, under pretence that it was consecrated to pious uses. Others, who were of noble rank, sent their sons to be educated by Wilfrid, that they might choose whether to serve the Church or the king; and it is likely that the bishop, who was young and fond of power, would engage as many of them in his own way of life as he could.

This was, indeed, his weak side. His influence was dangerous for a subject to possess; and he used many popular arts to promote it. His gifts to clergy and laymen were so large, that they were beyond all example. His retinue was princely both in number and apparel. Egfrid's first queen, Etheldreda, seems to have been obliged by her relatives, against her will, to enter upon a married life. When she had retired into a monastery, the second queen, Irminburga, not being a favourer of monasteries, was often reminding the king of Wilfrid's splendour, his large housekeeping, the number of monasteries, like palaces, that were rising round them, and his army of followers. Egfrid, who had reason to complain of some encroachment on his rights, summoned Theodore to hear his accusations against him. Theodore seems to have proposed that Wilfrid's great bishopric should be divided into two; but as Wilfrid refused any lessening of his power, he was deposed. After his departure, the province of Northumbria was divided between the sees of York and Hexham, and again a few years afterwards into four, Ripon and

[10] The Saxon kings, on the death of an earl or thane, had a claim to some of his best horses and suits of armour, and a sum in gold. But if he left his property to the Church, it passed without these heriots.

Lindisfarne being added; and a fifth bishop was appointed for the part of the kingdom which lay in Scotland, whose see was at Abercorn or Whithern, in Galloway. It is said that Wilfrid left some thousands of monks in Northumbria to be governed by these bishops.

Wilfrid's character was active and enterprising; and he did not remain quiet under this misfortune. He determined to go to Rome; and it is the only instance of an English churchman before the Conquest who tried to use the pope's authority against the sovereign and the Church of his own country. He found pope Agatho and a council of bishops assembled to debate upon some heresy of the time; and having given a good account of his own faith, he was sent back with letters to the king ornamented with a bull[11] and waxen seal; an unusual sight to the Saxons, who only signed their letters with a *rood-token*, or mark of a cross. When Wilfrid displayed this ensign of victory before king Egfrid, that monarch was rude enough to say he had bribed the pope; and treating him as a rebel, sent him to prison at Brunton in Northumberland, and afterwards at Dunbar. After he had remained here nine months, St. Ebba, a pious woman, to whose honour one of the churches at Oxford is dedicated, abbess of Coldingham, the king's aunt, procured his release; but he was not now permitted to remain in the country. He went to Mercia, and afterwards to Wessex; but the influence of Egfrid drove him out from both.

Affliction mends the heart, and often quickens a zeal for the cause of God, when prosperity had gone

[11] The pope's letters have been called bulls, from the *bull* or leaden seal, with the image of St. Peter and St. Paul, hanging to them. In former times kings and emperors on the continent used to hang such seals at the bottom of their letters of authority.

near to quench it. The banished man, finding the Christian kingdoms shut against him, went to try his fortunes with the poor pagans of Sussex, who were yet almost excluded from the society of the rest of England. Their king had, indeed, received baptism, and had married a Christian princess from another province; and a Scottish monk had established a small monastery at Bosham, near Chichester. But the poor men lived here, and sung their psalms, like the pilgrim-fathers in New England;

> Amidst the woods they sung,
> And the stars heard, and the sea:

but not one of the people of the province came to learn their rule of life or hear their preaching. It happened, however, shortly before Wilfrid came among them, there had been long-continued drought in their country, and a severe famine had followed. Without resource in this distress, there would go forty or fifty of them in companies, shrunken and pined for lack of food, to the heights along their coast, and desperately joining their hands together, that if one's resolution or strength should fail, he might be dragged on by his next fellow, throw themselves down to be dashed in pieces by the cliffs or swallowed by the waves below. In the midst of this wreck of life came Wilfrid among them; and finding the misery greatly enhanced by their ignorance of the art of fishing (for except the few eels which they picked out of the miller's dam, their skill was unable to guide them to any other supply), he collected all the nets they could muster, and joining them together, directed an experiment to be made upon the sea; and this proving very successful, both the people whom he had rescued from perishing and the king received him as a messenger of truth with the greatest willingness. The king gave him a large grant of

land at Selsey, which was long afterwards a bishop's see, before it was changed to Chichester; and on the day that Wilfrid held his first public baptism among them, a shower of mild abundant rain seemed to shew that a God of mercy was restoring the earth, for the sake of those who had turned to acknowledge His power.

After ten years of banishment, Egfrid being slain in a battle with the Picts, Aldfrid his brother and successor recalled Wilfrid, who had before been reconciled with Theodore. He was not, however, a character fitted to remain at rest; and after the death of the aged archbishop, trying to undo his arrangements of the sees in the north, he was again deposed by a council of bishops; and refusing the monastery of Ripon, which was offered him as a residence, again appealed to Rome. Pope John wrote to Aldfrid, but with no better success than his predecessor; but as Bertwald, archbishop of Canterbury at that time, and Ethelred, king of Mercia, who had become an abbot, took his part, his restoration was procured after Aldfrid's death. He died at Oundle, a monastery he had founded in Mercia, A.D. 709, ending his remarkable and troubled life forty-five years after his first consecration to the bishop's office.

It would have been happy for the Church, if a man of such ability to serve it had been more free from ambition, and more ruled by the prudent counsels of Theodore, who, during the first years of Wilfrid's trials, was pursuing his own designs of peaceful improvement. A war having broken out between Ethelred, king of Mercia, and Egfrid, A.D. 679, the Christian mediation of Theodore restored peace. He first introduced a practice, which was long continued with great benefit to the Church, of frequently holding councils or assemblies of bishops and clergy for the regulation of the Church in dif-

ferent provinces, and laying down laws or canons for faith and practice. Among other good rules passed at the first council, held at Hertford, A.D. 673, it was resolved that the number of bishops should be increased as the faith was spread into new provinces, and that they should take occasion, as they could, to obtain the consent of the Saxon kings to this increase. Agreeably to this resolution, beside the new sees which he had founded in the north, he was enabled to found the bishopric of Hereford A.D. 675, that of Worcester A.D. 679, and in A.D. 686 to appoint a bishop at Selsey, where Wilfrid had so happily prepared the ground. He was also an encourager of the building of country churches apart from monasteries, having, as it is likely, seen the benefit of having parish priests, according to the institutions of Justinian, the Grecian emperor, in his native country; and for this end he seems to have begun the rule, which afterwards became a Saxon law, that the thanes or country gentlemen, who built such churches on their estates, should pay a portion of the tithes to the priest of their own church, instead of paying all to the minster or cathedral. From this beginning, of which perhaps there were only a few examples in Theodore's lifetime, arose our excellent arrangement of parish churches.[12] It does not belong to this History to speak of a book which he wrote on the rule of priests for dealing with penitents; which was for a long time held in high value at home and abroad. He is said to have been harsh towards the Welch Christians, not allowing them to receive the sacrament with the English, unless they conformed. But his merit is proved by the great advancement of Christianity in his time, the work of his wise and vigorous old age. He found the people rude and

[12] Parishes are mentioned in Theodore's Penitential, c. xliii. § 2; and Alcuin, Epist. lx.

ignorant, and gave them the means of good instruction; he found the Church divided, and left it united; he found it a missionary Church, scarcely fixed in more than two principal provinces, he left it what it will ever be, while the country remains in happiness and freedom, the established Church of England. He died at the advanced age of eighty-eight, A.D. 690.

TABLE.

Conversion of Kent began	A.D. 596
Essex, under Mellitus	604
———, under Cedda, bishop of Tilbury	653
Northumbria, under Paulinus	627
———————, under the Scots	635
East Anglia, under Felix, a Burgundian	631
Wessex, under Birinus of Genoa	633
Mercia, and the Middle Angles, under the Scots and their disciples	653
Sussex, under Wilfrid	68[illegible]

CHAPTER V.

EARLY ENGLISH MONASTERIES.

A life by solemn consecration given
To labour and to prayer, to nature and to heaven.
WORDSWORTH.

THE English reader will have an imperfect view of the state of Christianity in these early times, if we do not attempt to give some account of those ancient monasteries which we find were established, together with the faith of the gospel, among the Saxons, and which were before received among the Welch, Irish, and Scottish Christians, when as yet they did not acknowledge the patriarchal authority of the bishop of Rome.

We have been so long used to hear of the ignorance and idleness of monks and friars, that it requires some effort of mind to come to the belief that the old monks of the primitive Church were neither ignorant nor idle, but patterns of active virtue, and zealous promoters of learning and useful arts. One of the earliest patrons of monasteries was the excellent St. Basil, archbishop of Cæsarea in the lesser Asia, whose rules have been the foundation of all such institutions in the Greek Church. St. Basil died A.D. 378, the same year in which the Roman emperor Valens was overthrown and slain in a great battle with the Goths, and left the empire open to

the inroads of those fierce nations which shortly afterwards gained possession of it. This good bishop, perceiving that many Christians in his time were in trouble from the public disorders, and seeking for some way of life in which they could serve God without distraction, many having chosen to live as hermits in solitary places, advised them rather to unite together in colleges or monasteries, where they might have help from each other in cases of sickness or infirmity, and provoke each other to love and to good works. "This solitary life of hermits," he would say, "is a life of self-pleasing; it leads us to forget that we are members one of another; it makes a man bury his talent in the earth; it lays him open to the temptation of idleness, and how dangerous that temptation is, all who have read the gospel know. How can a man exercise any spiritual gift, when he deprives himself of all opportunity for its exercise? How shall he shew his humility, where there is no one to whom he can humble himself? How shall he shew compassion, when he has cut himself off from the society of his fellow-men? How shall he exercise himself to patience, when there is no man to resist his will? True, he may read the Scriptures, and their doctrine is enough for reformation of life; but if it is not put in practice, it is as if a man should learn the art of building, yet never build, the art of working in brass, and make no use of the materials given him. *Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity.* This good and pleasant thing, which the Holy Spirit compares to the breathing odours of the precious ointment of the high-priest, how can it be obtained in solitary living? The place to run our Christian course, the good way of advancement, the life of long exercise and practice of the Lord's commands, is where brethren dwell together."

With this view he promoted these religious societies about the East, having himself passed many years of his early religious life in visiting those which were then established in Egypt and other provinces, and afterwards having founded a monastery on an estate belonging to his own family in the neighbourhood of his birth-place. It was a high mountain, clothed with deep woods, from which many waters cool and clear flowed down, and uniting at the foot of the steep formed a river, enclosing on one side a sloping plain, which was fenced in on all other sides by the rising heights of the mountain behind, or by precipices which raised it above the level country below. A natural belt of trees enclosed this space of ground; and on it, near the only outlet to the adjoining lands, Basil built a dwelling large enough to admit a society of his religious friends, and invited them by letters to come and share his retirement. Near to his door, the river, falling over a ridge of rock, rolled down into a deep basin, affording him the sight of one of the greatest natural beauties, and furnishing the inhabitants of the place with a plenteous supply of fish, which made a principal portion of their fare. In the neighbouring woods, where the deer and wild goats browsed without disturbance from the brothers of the convent, and whose quiet was only broken by a wandering hunter now and then, were trees of every kind, flowering and fruitful shrubs; and the climate and soil were such as to give them every kind of produce for cultivation: but, most of all, it was a spot which gave to Basil, who had passed his first years in the turmoil of the bar, the fruit of religious rest and peace of mind.

The eastern monks, whose habits were formed under his rule, were not for the most part priests, but laymen; but they had always one or more

priests in the community, who guided their worship and administered the sacraments among them. They met together seven times a day for a short prayer, and to sing a hymn or psalm;[1] at daybreak, at nine o'clock, at twelve, at three, and again at six in the evening, at nine, and at midnight. Their monastery was a house of hospitality to travellers, and they gave the same frugal fare, on which they lived, to rich and poor, that the one might see a pattern of Christian poverty and plainness, and the other might not think of the hardship of his lot, when he saw that those who were born to more abundance had cheerfully embraced it. They were constantly employed at other times in such labours as gave them occupation without anxiety; for which reason those arts were preferred which combined cheapness with simplicity, not requiring costly materials, or ministering to vanity. Building and carpentry, working in brass, weaving and shoemaking, were the most common. Others tended the flocks (for they commonly had flocks near the monasteries), or tilled the ground; and this kind of occupation Basil particu-

[1] One of the earliest hymns of the Christian Church, sung by St. Basil and his monks as an evening hymn, is preserved, and has been translated by the Rev. John Keble. It is addressed to the true Light of light, our Saviour:—

Hail, gladdening Light, of His pure glory poured,
Who is the immortal Father, heavenly, blest,
Holiest of holies—Jesus Christ our Lord.
Now we are come to the sun's hour of rest,
The lights of evening round us shine,
We hymn the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit divine!
Worthiest art Thou at all times to be sung
With undefiled tongue,
Son of our God, Giver of life, alone!
Therefore in all the world thy glories, Lord, we own.

Some notice of St. Basil's hours of prayer may be also found in Bishop Cosin's Devotions, of which a new edition has been lately published.

larly encouraged. When the artificers had prepared a stock of clothing or other things for sale, they were sent in small companies to places where they were likely to be well received, and held a kind of charity-bazaar. There were some convents which had these sales within their walls; but this practice was less approved. Their own clothing was very plain, and belonged to a common stock, none being allowed to possess any property separate from the community; but Basil discouraged any excess of plainness, justly observing that there may be a desire of popular praise, and somewhat of vanity, in affecting meanness of dress, as well as in needless ornament.

In the social evils of the people they often found employment for benevolence and charity. Sometimes a poor slave would fly to the monastery, to entreat their intercession with a hard master; and they would use their influence to obtain some mitigation of his lot. If they were unsuccessful, they prepared him to suffer as a Christian should, and were ready to suffer for him rather than neglect whatever they could do for his relief. Their house was a school for orphans, whom they clothed and fed and educated, together with the children of such parents as chose to commit them to their charge. For these they had a separate building and chambers set apart, that they might be employed in their studies and at play, without disturbing their elders. But they met together at prayers; "for children," said Basil, "are moved to sad and serious thought by imitating the aged; and the help is great which the aged receive from children in their prayers." In other respects, the care and tenderness with which he directed their teachers to watch over them, to correct their childish faults, to encourage their studies by rewards,

were such as none of our later systems of education have surpassed.

It would naturally happen that the children thus brought up, and especially the orphans, when they grew to years of discretion, would wish to remain in the monastery, and make their profession of abiding by the rules. This Basil would not allow them to do, till their reason was come to its full power, that there might be no doubt of the choice being deliberately made. At this period those who did not choose to become monks were allowed to go where they pleased; those who entered the society signed an agreement before the heads of the monastery, which was kept as a record of it. He gave direction also, that if any parents brought their children to be received into his rule, they should not be received till they were able to judge freely for themselves. The novice took upon him no vows; but the elders offered prayers for him, as for one that had more immediately consecrated himself to the service of God. Still further to guard against any rash engagement, the young person who offered himself was charged to take some days to consider and inquire what it was that he engaged to do, before he was received. But if after this they chose to renounce their profession, the rest were taught to consider it as a forfeiting of their Christian integrity and truth. Such were the rules and practices of the best monasteries in the East; under such discipline had archbishop Theodore lived for the early part of his life, and something of this kind we may expect to find introduced by him into England.

But there were other monasteries before his time, as we have already seen; those which St. Germain introduced into Wales being the earliest that were known in Britain, and next to them those which St.

Patrick, the pupil of Germain, established in Ireland. From Ireland was founded Iona; and from Iona the Scottish missionaries had founded Lindisfarne, and other religious houses in the south as well as the north of England. We have seen that they had settled in Sussex, before the people of that province were converted by Wilfrid. And another monastery, in Wessex, of the greatest name in old English history, Malmsbury, "Maidulf's borough." owes its name and foundation to Maidulf, a Scottish monk, who fixed himself there and taught a school, about the same time

[IONA, THE RESIDENCE OF ST COLUMBA.]

A friendly intercourse between the Saxon Christians and the monks of Scotland and Ireland continued to be kept up from the time of Aidan to the time of Bede, Alcuin, and Alfred. And though

these monasteries were situated in the midst of countries ruled by barbarous chiefs, and never succeeded far in reforming their wild manners, yet it is certain that they were long in high repute for their Christian discipline. The learned teachers of Ireland came not only into Great Britain, but into France and Italy, to instruct and edify the churches of Christ in those countries.[2] And we have seen how Agilbert, the French bishop of Dorchester, had visited Ireland for the sake of study and improvement, and how many Saxons went with Colman into that country, to which others continued to go after his departure. It is necessary, therefore, to ask what was the character of the discipline of these native monasteries, as they must have had great influence in forming the early Saxon religious houses.

There is every reason to believe that their rule was most like St. Basil's. It may be judged of in some measure by what we have seen of Aidan and his monks at Lindisfarne. We have also some means of learning its character from the writings of Columban, an Irish missionary, who, while Augustine and Mellitus were in Kent, was employed in founding monasteries in France, Switzerland, and Italy; dying at Bobbio, in the last-mentioned country, A.D. 615. His exhortations to his monks speak something of austerity, but are marked by simplicity and good sense. "Think not," he says, "that it is enough to weary these bodies, formed of the dust of the earth, with watching and fasting, unless we reform our manners. To make lean the flesh, if the soul bears no fruit, is like working the ground without being able to make it bear a crop; it is like making an image of gold on the outside, and of clay within. True piety dwells in humbleness of soul, not of body; for

[2] Alcuin, Epist. ccxxi.

of what use is it to set the servant to fight with passions, while those passions are good friends with the master? It is not enough to hear talk or to read of virtue. Can a man cleanse his house of defilement by words only? can he without pain and toil accomplish his daily task? Gird up your loins, therefore, and cease not to maintain a good fight: none but he who fights bravely can gain the crown."

Such plain speaking shews the active character of the life which was led in these ancient British monasteries. The members of such societies lived under a rule enjoining labour, abstinence, and hours of prayer. The houses governed by the disciples of Germain were the nurseries of the Church also, that the young who were educated there might do the Church service afterwards.[3] Nor was there any material difference made in those which were founded after the arrival of the disciples of Gregory; as we hear of no dispute or variance between the Roman and Scottish monks, except on the subject of keeping Easter, and the mode of shaving the head. There was then no rivalry of different orders, such as arose subsequently in the history of the Church.

St. Benedict, to whom, at a later period, most of the monks in western Europe looked back as to their founder, was born at Nursia in Italy, about A.D. 480, and his order was first instituted in A.D. 529, more than a century after the time of Germain. Some of the early Saxon monks had heard of Benedict and his rule; but it was either not at this time received into England, or it was not of the same character as it afterwards assumed under subsequent reforms. The beginning of this order in England will be noticed as having taken place two or three hundred years later, in the time of St. Dunstan.

[3] Bishop Stillingfleet.

The character of the earlier Saxon monasteries will best be seen, if we take an example from one of the most famous, that in which the Venerable Bede received his education, the monastery of Jarrow in Northumberland.

Benedict Biscop, a Northumbrian nobleman, one of the ministers at the court of king Oswy, at the age of twenty-five determined to quit his worldly honours and embrace a religious life. He went to Rome about A.D. 663, and again a few years later; and having studied for some time there, went to reside for two years as a novice in the famous monastery of Lerins in the south of France. He then paid a third visit to Rome, just at the time that Theodore was about to be sent as archbishop to England. He was glad of the opportunity to make his acquaintance, and accompanied him to this country, bringing with him so many books and manuscripts, and also relics of apostles and martyrs, as were the wonder of the Christians in Northumberland.

King Egfrid, who had now succeeded his father Oswy, received him kindly, and gave him a large grant of land to build a monastery near the mouth of the river Wear, at the place now called Monk Wearmouth. To this place he brought skilful masons and artificers of glass from France;[4] and sparing nothing in cost or labour, soon completed the work.

[4] These were the first artificers of glass, says Bede, who were known among the Saxons. They glazed the windows of the church and the lodgings of the monastery; and from them the English learnt the art, A.D. 678. "It is an art," says Bede, "not to be despised for its use in furnishing lamps for cloisters, and many other kinds of vessels." It is most likely, however, that the Romans had taught the ancient Britons this art before, if they did not themselves know it; for the Druids are said to have used glass rings for amulets or charms. And the glass used by Wilfrid at York minster was a few years earlier than this at Jarrow. See p. 78.

The church was dedicated by the king's direction to St. Peter, the first pastor of Rome. Scarcely was this monastery reared, when this active and liberal Saxon again went abroad, paid a fourth visit to Rome, and returned with rich gifts and ornaments for the church, and another collection of books. He also obtained a letter from pope Agatho approving the regulations of the monastery, as the king had requested, and brought with him as a visitor a Roman abbot, who was very skilful in the art of chanting and church-music. The monks of Wearmouth were thus instructed perfectly in the manner of divine service as it was used at Rome. The king now increased his grant of land; and Biscop determined to raise a second monastery near the other. This was dedicated to St. Paul, and was Bede's monastery of Jarrow. The founder of these religious houses passed most of his life in these travels; and it was not till he had made five journeys to gather stores for his great foundation, that he returned to die at home.

In a monastery like this, where the advancement of learning was so much the aim of its founder, we might have expected there would have been no room for such arts and labour as St. Basil enjoined. But it was not so. When Biscop was abroad on some of his later journeys, he entrusted the charge of one of the houses to Ceolfrid, a learned friend; the other to his own nephew Osterwin, a young nobleman who had become a monk at Wearmouth. This young noble, who had come from an office of dignity in the court of king Egfrid, used to thrash and winnow the corn with the other monks, with all cheerful obedience, to milk the cows and sheep,[5] to

[5] It was common to milk sheep in England when Tusser wrote his "Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandrie," A.D. 1557. It is still usual in some parts of Wales.

work at the mill, in the garden, in the kitchen, and to share all the labours of the monastery. When he was made abbot, he was still the same; ready to take a part at whatever task he found the brothers engaged; at the iron-forge, or guiding the plough, or shaking the winnowing-fan. He slept in the common dormitory,—as was usual in these houses, where the monks had one dress for night and for day, that they might rise without delay to prayer,—till feeling the attack of a fatal disease upon him, five days before his death, he retired to a private chamber. On the morning of the day on which he died, he had a seat placed for him in the open air; and, calling all the brotherhood together, who were moved to tears at the early death of so kind a friend and pastor, gave them the kiss of peace, and quietly breathed his last. He died at the age of thirty-six, at the hour of singing the morning psalms.

Such was the kind of life which was led by the greater part of the members of these communities. But others, who had the charge of instructing the young, or those who had taken any of the offices of the ministry, were less employed in these manual labours. Bede himself must undoubtedly have passed his spare time in study, when he was not employed in teaching his pupils; or rather, he made the two employments meet in one, as a skilful teacher will, and was learning himself while he instructed others. It was a common regulation in early monasteries, to employ some of the younger monks in making copies of the Gospels, the Psalter, and the books used in the services of the Church; and the want of a supply of these books must have been so great, that no doubt the practice was begun soon after the introduction of learning into the country. In all the larger monasteries was kept a chronicle or register of the reign and life and death of

kings, the election of bishops, and all remarkable events of war and peace. One of these chronicles, kept at the old Saxon monastery of Medhamstead, or Peterborough, has been preserved to this time. and is one of the most valuable records of ancient times in this country. There was also another register-book, in which the monks kept copies of all the decrees made at councils of the early English Church, the priests who attended there being ordered to bring ink and parchment to write them down. And it is most likely, that the copies of the laws passed by Ethelbert and other Christian princes after him were kept at some of the principal monasteries, where the bishops held their sees; as the Saxon kings had no other record-office than those the Church supplied.

It is plain that the Saxons, as soon as they embraced Christianity, were eager to abound in gifts of land to the Church, and to favour the building of monasteries; and however we may judge of their way of proving their zeal, we must admire the spirit with which they so freely gave to advance the cause of God. Many of the churches which they founded with these religious houses have preserved a place sacred to divine worship from their time until now; and we owe to them, after twelve hundred years of chance and change, the best institutions that can belong to a Christian land. And at the time when Christianity began among them, there was scarcely the means of living a religious life, except by becoming a member of such communities as these. Persons of the highest rank, weary of the noisy feasting which made up most of the state of a Saxon court, undertook the quiet rule of a monastery, as a charge more suited to a peaceful and thoughtful mind. St. Hilda, who founded the abbey of Whitby, was one of these: she was a niece of king Edwin, and received baptism from Paulinus; and chose the

life of a recluse, under the approval of bishop Aidan, at the first nunnery which was founded among the Northumbrians, at Hartlepool. When some way advanced in life, she bought an estate at Whitby, where she built the abbey over which she presided, and where she died A.D. 680. She was a person of eminent ability and prudence, as well as piety; so that her counsel in difficulties was sought, not only by persons in the common class of life, but also by kings and princes. The discipline of her monks, and their attainments, were so remarkable, that five of them were at different times called from their cells to take upon them the office of bishops: but the fame of the place remains still greater from its having been the abode of CÆDMON, the earliest English sacred poet, whose songs on the subjects of history contained in the Bible contributed to enlighten the people's minds with divine truth, and to inspire them with the love of holiness. Etheldreda, the wife of Egfrid, having left the partnership of a crown to enter upon the same way of life, enjoyed a high reputation for her remarkable self-denial and devoted piety; making it her practice to pass her whole time in prayer in the church, from the time of singing the midnight hymn to the dawn of day. She was the founder of the abbey of Ely, which became, after the Norman Conquest, a bishop's see. Of like name for piety in high station were St. Ethelburga, sister of Erconwald, bishop of London, first abbess of the great monastery of Barking; St. Osith, wife of Sighere, a king of Essex; and St. Werburga, of Chester, daughter of Wulfhere, king of Mercia, the founder of what is now the cathedral church of that ancient city.

It is true that the places which these pious Saxons chose for the seat of monasteries were not always so full of natural beauty as St. Basil's moun-

tain-side. Many were built in fens and marshes; as Medhamstead, "the home in the meadow," afterwards Peterborough; and, in later Saxon times, Crowland and Ramsey. Bede truly describes Ely, as it must have been before the marshes were drained: "It is a district of land," he says, "like an island, compassed all about with fen and water; so that it has its name, Elige, 'Eel-island,' from the number of eels that are caught in these same fens." Of much the same description was Boston, "Botolph's Town," founded about this time by a Saxon saint, whose name was great in early times, though little is known of him now, except that he was a nobleman who, having learnt the monastic life in France, returned to found this monastery at a place called Icanhoe, since called after his name. But his reputation must have extended far in Mercia; as not only in London and Lincolnshire, but in all the midland, many churches are dedicated in towns and villages to his memory.

It is likely that these situations in the marshes and fen-districts were chosen as places of security, at a time when the more frequented parts of the country were often the scene of war. For the same reason, after the Norman Conquest, the last Saxon who held out against the Conqueror, Hereward, "the hardy outlaw," retreated to Ely as his place of defence; and a party of the barons here made their last resistance against Prince Edward, afterwards Edward I., when they had lost the battle of Evesham. The choice of such places seems to have been taught to the Saxons by the Scots, who had fixed their monasteries at Iona and Lindisfarne, to be out of the way of public disturbance. They chose also places surrounded by deep woods, such as Bosham in Sussex, before mentioned, and Lastingham, which, when Cedda founded it, was a spot

among the Cleveland hills, high and far from all abode, except the dens of wild beasts, and of robbers, who led as wild a life as they.

The Britons also had consecrated such retreats to religious uses. The famous Dubritius retired in his old age to Bardsey island, near the coast of Caernarvonshire; and the island of Holyhead had an ancient monastery built upon it. The celebrated abbey of Glastonbury was probably a Welch monastery before king Ina of Wessex, at the close of the seventh century, took Somerset from the Welch, and raised his own great foundation there. There seems no reason to doubt that king Arthur was buried in the island of Avalon, or Ynis-vitryn, "the glassy island," as it was called by the Welch, being surrounded at that time with a wide lake of still waters, before the streams that encircle it were confined to their banks; and here there was a church founded by the Saxons, built, as they sometimes built their churches, of that kind of stud-building still in use in many parts of the country, where it has not given way to brick or stone.[6] In all likelihood the Britons had a monastery here, for at such places their princes were buried; and whatever may be thought of St. Patrick's coming to Glastonbury to die, and of the legend about Joseph of Arimathea, the tomb of Arthur discovered in Henry II.'s reign is a strong proof of the ancient religion of the place.

And this practice the Welch again seem to have

[6] The notion which some modern accounts would give of this old Welch church is, that it was a hovel made of wattled brambles, like a modern cow-shed. Is it likely that the ancient Britons should have had the Romans four hundred years in the country, and yet, after all, be something lower than Hottentots in the scale of civilisation? No doubt it was a stud-building, with glazed windows; for how should the Welch have called the place "the glassy island," as the Saxons called it "Glasstown-bury," if they had no notion what glass was?

been taught by St. Germain and his disciples. Germain was a disciple of Honoratus, first abbot of Lerins, from whose monastery came Hilary bishop of Arles, and many other famous and learned Christian teachers, in that time of public confusion when the Goths were breaking up the Roman empire. Here, in the small island of Lerins, now called the island of St. Honorat, near Marseilles, the Gallic Christians found an asylum; while the Italians fled to Gorgona near Leghorn, or to the islands in the Adriatic Sea, from whom the city of Venice took its rise. The pagan Romans, in the hour of their destruction, scoffed at these religious retreats. "This sect of monks," said one of their last poets, "use worse enchantments than the old witch Circe; for she only changed men's bodies, but they change the spirit and the soul." But thus, while the old heathendom perished, it was the providence of God to preserve a small remnant of Christians, to kindle again the light of religion, and restore the love of brotherhood in the Christian world.

Besides the famous monasteries already mentioned, there arose in almost every part of England religious houses of the same character; particularly in Kent, at Dover, Reculver, and Minster in the isle of Thanet, built by Egbert, a king of Kent, A.D. 670, for his daughter St. Mildred; at Bedricsworth, afterwards Bury, in Suffolk; at Bardney, in Lincolnshire; at Beverley, and at Melrose on the Tweed, then within the borders of Northumbria, where St. Cuthbert was one of the first abbots; at Repton, in Derbyshire; at Oxford, St. Fridiswide's, now the cathedral of Christ Church; at Wimborne Minster, Dorset; and at Bath. This ancient city, whose warm springs were known to the Romans, and made it a favourite residence with them, seems also to have been used as a resort of sick persons by

the Saxons, who called it Akemanchester, "aching men's city." The nunnery, which was founded there by Osric, a petty king of the Wiccas (or men of Worcester and Gloucestershire), A.D. 676, was probably a house in which the pious maidens might be employed in ministering to the infirm and aged, who came thither for relief.

Wherever a bishop's see was established in a province, the next step taken was to found monasteries in different places. Theodore had no need to stir up the Saxons to such works, for he found them quite ready to undertake them. Kings, nobles, and bishops, were all vying with each other in their efforts to promote the best means, as it then seemed, to spread the faith of Christ into all quarters of the land. It was Theodore's care, while he forbade any bishop to disturb the monks, and "maidens serving God," as they called the nuns, in their property and dwellings, to order, at the council of Hertford, that no monks should go wandering about the country, or leave one monastery for another, without the abbot's leave. By this rule he prevented those vagabond habits, of which St. Augustine and St. Jerome had before complained, and provided for that obedience to their superior, which is necessary to the well-being of every community formed among men.

Specimen of an early Saxon Charter,

CONTAINING A GRANT TO A MONASTERY.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Ruler and Guide! On the sixth of July, A.D. 680.

We brought nothing into this world, neither may we carry any thing out; therefore we must provide heavenly things with earthly, and eternal with those that perish and decay. For which cause I, bishop Eddi,[7] freely give to abbot Hemgils three hydes of land at Lantocal; and also land in another place for two dwellings, that is, in an island, which is surrounded on each side by a marsh, or pool, the name of which is Ferra-mere. And I pray that no man after my death presume to undo this gift; but if any one shall attempt it, let him know that he will be called to give an account to Christ.

✠ I, Eddi the Bishop, sign it with my name.

[7] Eddi, or Hedda, was bishop of Winchester, A.D. 677-704. A hyde of land was about sixty acres. Hemgils was abbot of Glastonbury; and Ferra-mere seems to be the village of Meare near Glastonbury.

CHAPTER VI.

EFFECTS OF THE MONASTERIES ON SOCIETY. BENEFITS AND DEFECTS. PILGRIMAGES AND HERMITS.

Go to the ants or bees, as the Proverbs of Solomon bid you; and from those little people learn the good order of a kingdom,—or of a monastery.

ST. JEROME.

IT will now be well to take a view both of the benefits and of the evils of the monasteries, and of other practices which were brought in with them. It has never been the fault of the English people to enter coldly on any plans of public reform which they have once taken up: and this was proved in the zeal of our Saxon forefathers in rearing these religious houses. It was a great benefit that there should be places of education, where the young might be trained for the service of the Church or state: it was well that there should be places of retirement, where the aged might end their days in penitence and prayer; and places of refuge, where the orphan and friendless might find support and protection. But these places were multiplied beyond the need of the country; and the rage for them led improper persons to enter upon this way of life, to the neglect of more pressing duties. It may be, that if those who lived under the rule of a monastery thought this life more favourable to religion than one burdened with married cares, the

apostle St. Paul was of the same opinion: but it was never meant that husbands and wives should therefore separate from each other, and go into different monasteries. It might have been piety in parents to permit their children, when they were old enough to make this choice, to take upon themselves the religious habit; but it was a superstitious tyranny when parents determined this without consulting their children's inclination, and while they were of tender years. Thus king Oswy, before his battle with Penda, is said to have vowed that he would dedicate his daughter Elfleda, then scarcely a twelvemonth old, to live in holy maidenhood. She was placed under the charge of St. Hilda, whom she afterwards succeeded as abbess of Whitby. In her case it does not seem to have put a force upon her own inclination; but if such an example was followed by other parents, it must in many cases have led to great misery; and no sacrifice can be acceptable to God, where the will does not consent to the offering. We may, indeed, believe that such acts were not common; for the Saxons had in general a scrupulous regard to the liberty and proper influence of women; they were sometimes governed by queens; and their monasteries, which sometimes consisted of men and women dwelling under separate roofs, were placed, like St. Hilda's, under the government of an aged female. And Bede, who tells us of this vow of Oswy's, informs us that this king was not a perfect Christian character; that he was led too much by ambition, and not very scrupulous about the means he took for compassing his ends. It is often found that the religion of such characters is mixed with superstition; they try to compound for their crimes by splendid offerings; and their sense of natural affection being dulled or lost, they are ready to sacrifice

any thing rather than their own besetting sins. If there is any other way of accounting for such an act as this, it probably arose from a mistaken imitation of the vow of Jephtha, or of Hannah the mother of Samuel.

We are not to suppose, however, that all these monasteries were of the same character, under the government of single men or single women. Many of them were kept by married persons, widowers or widows; and the inmates, though they did not there live with their families, were persons who had done their duty in their generation, and retired to serve God in their old age, without always renouncing the ties of kindred. Ostrytha, another daughter of Oswy, was the queen of Ethelred, king of Mercia, and a great benefactress to the monastery of Bardney, in Lincolnshire. Here she often retired to pass her time in acts of devotion and charity. In the year A.D. 697, she was unhappily slain in a tumult of the Lincolnshire people; and Ethelred, after a few years, having first taken his brother Conred for a short time to share his throne, in his old age retired to die at Bardney. It is most likely that such monasteries as these, into which aged princes withdrew, were inhabited by persons who had seen the world, and having tasted enough of what it has to give, were content to bid it farewell; and we may look back with some respect upon the memory of those, who, raised to the height of worldly dignity, found out its deceitfulness, and instead of turning their brief authority to a means of oppression, sought a purer satisfaction for the soul in the pursuit of an hereafter. Such was Bede's friend and patron Ceolwulf, king of Northumbria, who, A.D. 737, two years after the death of Bede, resigned his crown, and became a monk at Lindisfarne. Such was his successor Eg-

bert, who, after a brave and happy reign of more than twenty years, laid down his greatness, and lived for ten years more under the discipline of his brother Egbert, archbishop of York, A.D. 768.[1] Others there were, who, with the enthusiasm of youth, devoted themselves at the outset of life to the same service; such as Offa, a prince of Essex, who, with Conred of Mercia, betook himself to a monk's life at Rome, A.D. 709. He was a youth of great personal beauty, says Bede, and his pleasing manners made him most acceptable to the people, who looked forward with hopes to the time when he should be called to govern them. He was also honourably betrothed to a princess of Mercia: but he left all the wealth, and power, and pleasure that courted him, for Christ's sake and the Gospel's;

> "He gave his honours to the world again,
> His better part to heaven"

We must confess, though a mistaken sense of duty ruled his choice, that it was no common power of religion, which could take him at so early an age from all the advantages of birth and state, to live in a foreign land, in unknown society and undistinguished habits, and to give himself up to a life of prayer, and fasting, and alms-deeds.

To come, however, to more common life. It appears that many of the monasteries were private property, founded by clergymen or laymen, who turned their country houses into colleges for religious persons. Earl Osred, A.D. 743, obtained a grant of an estate from Ethelbald of Mercia, at Aston and Turkdean, Gloucestershire, on condition that he should support "a family of God's servants" on it. A clergyman, named Hedda, about A.D. 787, gave a charter of some estates in Worcestershire to

[1] See Chap. IX.

his kinsman, bishop Hathored, as a security that the land should remain with his own heirs of the male line, as long as there should be any in holy orders to take the government of a monastery he had founded; but if they should fail, as he did not wish the monastery to be governed by laymen, he left it to the cathedral at Worcester, that the bishop for that time might appoint a priest for abbot. This arrangement was plainly a step towards turning the monastery into a parsonage, and endowing a parish church. And it is plain that the worthy clergyman who drew this deed was neither a monk himself, nor wished his children after him to be so. Another deed of earlier date, about A.D. 737, drawn up by Nothelm, a friend of Bede's, who had been a London clergyman, and was now archbishop of Canterbury, speaks of a nunnery at Huddingdon in Worcestershire, which had been the property of a Saxon lady named Dunna, granted her by king Ethelred. On her deathbed she had bequeathed this nunnery and the estate to her daughter Rothwara, then of tender age; whose father having married a second wife, the step-mother had taken possession of the lands, and also of her mother's will, which she pretended to have been stolen from her. The deed, which is signed by all the bishops of the province of Canterbury, declares the property to belong to Rothwara, on condition that the nunnery should be kept up, and pronounces the displeasure of God upon those who had attempted to defraud her of it. It is a proof of the same kind, that these monasteries or religious houses were private property, that they were often presided over by married persons, who had the power of leaving them to their heirs.

It is true that Bede himself did not approve of some who, with too little inclination for the discipline of a monastery, undertook the care of such

places. The fashion had gone too far. There were many sheriffs of counties, and town-reeves, or mayors of boroughs, who had taken upon themselves to set up monasteries, and passed their time half in the business of their magistrate's office, half within the walls of the religious houses. The king's thanes, or officers of the court, were doing the same; so that they were acting the part of abbots and ministers of state together. And Bede, who was himself a monk, did not wish to see persons in the charge of abbeys, who were, as he says, dividing their time between the observance of a religious rule and the company of their wives and children. Indeed, there was some ground for his fear that this rage would lead to public inconvenience. The privileges which the kings had granted to these lands were such as to tempt many, who only desired idleness, to take refuge in the loosely governed monasteries from their duties to the state. So that Cuthbert, archbishop of Canterbury, at one of the councils held at Cliff's-hoe, near Rochester, A.D. 742, thought it necessary to decree, that the monasteries should not be made places of retreat for singers, minstrels, or jesters. The advice of Bede, which he gave to Egbert, archbishop of York, a short time before his own death, was therefore no doubt well timed and necessary. He reminded him that it was his business, as bishop, to visit the monasteries, and to take care that the places consecrated to God should not be given up to the dominion of the devil. He recommended that the number of bishops should rather be increased, and that some of the larger monasteries should be turned into bishops' sees. This letter of his, which he wrote about the year A.D. 735, is supposed to have been the last work of his hand; and it is a remarkable monument of his love of his country and prudent foresight. If these houses went on

increasing, he said, without a check to their abuses, the country would be overstocked with them; there would not be estates left for the nobles and country gentlemen; and the persons who were wanted to defend the country against invaders would not be found at the time of need. "We have had a long time of peace and calm in Northumbria," he said; "and now many of our people, themselves and their bairns, gentle and simple, are more bent upon going into minsters, and taking the shaven crown, than upon going to the camp-exercise. What the end of this will be, another age will shew." It is probable that archbishop Egbert, and Adelbert or Albert, his learned successor, acted upon Bede's advice; for the misfortunes which afterwards befell the Northumbrians did not arise, as some have supposed, from their being too devout, but from their civil dissensions and wars.

The form of privilege which the monasteries enjoyed is said to have been first granted by Wihtred, king of Kent, A.D. 694-725; and it was continued in the other Saxon kings' charters before the Norman Conquest. The monastery-lands were set free from gable or land-tax; and the tenants obliged only to attend the king in war, and to pay *burgh-bote* and *brig-bote*, a kind of county-rates, levied for the repair of town-walls and bridges, but which were often paid, like other taxes in those early times, by personal service and labour. These lands, therefore, were commonly free from the most burdensome kind of tax, which all other lands had to pay to the king. This was confirmed by Ethelbald of Mercia, A.D. 742, at the council of Cliff's-hoe; and all the assembly of earls, bishops, and abbots, declared it to be a statute most worthy of a noble and prudent prince. Yet if the church-lands were greatly increased, it must have made some difference in the income of one of these

kings of provinces. The value of the gable or land-tax was in those days estimated in produce or stock instead of metal; and most likely the tax itself was often paid in live-stock or in grain. Thus in the laws of king Ina, of Wessex, about A.D. 692, the value of the tax of ten hydes of cultivated land, from six hundred to a thousand acres, is set down at ten pints of honey, three hundred loaves, twelve barrels of Welch ale, thirty of clear ale (perhaps pale ale), two old oxen or beeves, ten wethers, ten geese, twenty hens, ten cheeses, a tun of butter, five trout, one hundred eels, and a small weight of hay or fodder for cattle.[2] The givers of lands to monasteries did not always like to grant away this gable. Ethelwald, prince of the Wiccas, A.D. 706, makes it a clause in a grant to Egwin, bishop of Worcester, that if the wood-land at Ombersley, on the Severn, bear a good crop of acorns in any year, his swine-herd is to have the right of pasturing one herd of swine within the borders of the land he grants. And Offa, king of Mercia, A.D. 791, in renewing a charter and large grant of his predecessors to the abbey of Westbury, in Worcestershire, bargains that the land shall still pay the gable of two tuns of clear ale, a coomb (or kilderkin) of mild ale, a coomb of Welch ale, seven beeves, six wethers, forty cheeses, thirty bushels of rye-corn,[3] and four measures of

[2] Honey was a produce of high value in all ancient husbandry. The Saxons especially used it for their metheglin or mead, the only royal beverage before the Normans brought over French wines. Honey still continued to be a tax levied in kind till the time of the Conquest. Trout there must have been plenty in the Hampshire and Wiltshire streams, in king Ina's time; but the art of fly-fishing not being known till after Izaak Walton wrote, they were not so easily caught by the old Saxons, and therefore, it seems, were of greater value.

[3] Rye-corn perhaps means that mixture of rye and wheat, grown together, which in Cheshire is still called monk-corn. We have in this charter mention made of three kinds of ale; the

meal. It was also a common condition of holding land under the Saxon kings, that the owner should once or twice a year entertain the king and his court for a day and a night. The monasteries were often set free from this demand; or, if the king visited them, they were not required to furnish a great feast, but only what they would give with good will. And it would doubtless be some benefit to society, if the Saxon clergy, who had the care of monasteries, were anxious to enforce this condition, entertaining their visitors as bishop Aidan did at Lindisfarne; for it would be one way of checking the vice of drunkenness by example as well as precept,—a vice to which the Gothic and German nations were much addicted, which was much indulged at the Saxon courts, more by the Danes, and which is still the besetting vice of the English people.

The scarcity of the precious metals among the Saxons made a very small sum to be considered a good price for a large allotment of land. Edric, king of Kent, A.D. 686, sold to Theodore and Adrian for ten silver pounds, about thirty pounds sterling, about three hundred acres near the city of Canterbury, for the abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul, over which that learned abbot was then presiding. And Beonna, abbot of Peterborough, about a century afterwards, sold to earl Cuthbert a lease of three lives of the manor of Swineshead, about a thousand acres, for a shilling an acre, only reserving a yearly rent of thirty pence, or one night's entertainment.

The form of delivering up possession of an estate

Welch ale would seem to be the strongest. Our Saxon forefathers were not unlike their descendants in their opinion of the merits of this native and wholesome liquor. "Hwæt drincst thu?—Eala, gif ic hæbbe; oththe wæter, gif ic ne hæbbe eala." *Elfric's Colloquy:* i. e. "What drinkest thou?—Ale, if I have it; or water, if I have not ale."

among the pagan Saxons was to give a turf cut from the land to the purchaser or receiver, with a few words spoken to signify the intention of him who parted with it. At the shire-moot, or county-court, it was sufficient evidence about property, if a witness or two could prove that a person had spoken words declaring an intention to give or bequeath property to another. Thus, a son having claimed some lands that were in the possession of his mother, at a county-court, the judges, or sheriff, sent a small party of jurymen to hear what answer she would make. The poor woman was at that moment very angry with her son; and pointing to a kinswoman who was with her in the house, said, "Here sitteth my kinswoman Leofleda, to whom I give both gold and land, gown and kirtle, and all that I have, after my own day." The persons who heard this, having borne witness that such words had been spoken, the court gave judgment that Leofleda's husband was entitled to the property.[4] Such a way of making property change hands must certainly have left great temptation to bear false witness; and we find from the Saxon laws, that this was an evil which they were much perplexed to remedy. It was therefore a public benefit when the Christian counsellors required property to be made over by written deeds and charters; not only such as was given to monasteries, but that which the kings gave to their thanes, or one private person sold to another. The Saxons at first thought this a superfluous caution. When king Suefred of Essex, A.D. 704, gave Twickenham meadows, and some of the land which may be seen from Richmond Hill, to Waldhere bishop of London, he said, in the preamble to his deed,

A word spoken is enough for evidence; but that ne may hereafter ignorantly incur guilt, and since

[4] Preface to Mr. Kemble's Anglo-Saxon Charters, p. cxi.

parchment is cheap, it is as well to confirm it by a record that may last for time to come." "It is a good pattern that the Greeks have left us," said abbot Hedda of Worcestershire, alluding, as it seems, to archbishop Theodore, "to set down in writing whatever they would have to be known, that it may not be washed out of the memory." Still, the form of giving a piece of the sod was sometimes continued; and the sod was sometimes laid upon a copy of the Gospels, to make the form more sacred. There can be no doubt that all this had the effect of making property more safe and secure, and improving the industry and social order of the people.

Another improvement which the monasteries brought in, with the advance of internal peace, was, an increase of communication between one part of the kingdom and the other. It may perhaps be a surprise to some of those who think that all such commerce has begun with canals and railroads; but there were certainly persons living in the seventh and eighth centuries in England who saw the benefit of importations and exchange of produce between one part of the kingdom and another. And though they did not dream of turning earth into water, or hill into plain, yet they saw that the rivers flowing through the most inhabited parts of the country were many of them navigable, and that it would be useful if they could find conveyance for their heavy goods by water rather than by land. St. Mildred and her successors, abbesses of Minster in the isle of Thanet, had a vessel which regularly traded with the London markets about A.D. 747; and probably it conveyed wheat, which that island so plentifully produces; for which the church in Bread Street is properly placed to preserve the memory of her supplies. But this was an easy voyage, the distance being so small. It was a much longer trip which

was performed about the same time by two vessels of bishop Milred's of Worcester, which appear to have sailed from the Severn down by the Bristol Channel, and round by Cornwall to London up the Thames. There were salt-works at this time at Droitwich and Salwarp, which the bishop's tenants occupied; there were also lead-works at Hanbury; and the Welch are said to have had the art of making cider, which the Worcestershire and Hertfordshire men were not slow to learn from them.[5] It is possible that some part of their cargo consisted of these commodities; or they might have brought wool to exchange with foreign merchants, who at that time scarcely visited any part of England but London and the ports in Kent. However it might be, Ethelbald, king of Mercia, thought it well to let these vessels trade at "London-town-hythe" free of toll. Where religion has brought peace, the arts of peace will follow. As in later times the earliest colonies formed in America were promoted by clergymen, as Hackluyt and his friends,[6] so it was the Church which led the way in pointing out to the English people the beginnings of commerce, in these first ages after the settlement of Christianity. Whatever intercourse there was between different English ports, or with foreigners, was owing to the spirit of

[5] In the reign of Edward the Confessor, the Worcestershire people paid salt-tax in kind. *Seider*, which the Saxons called "apple-wine," is said to be an ancient British word. The "strong drink" in our Bibles, St. Luke i. 15, is in Wickliffe's old English version called "sydyr."

[6] Richard Hackluyt, prebendary of Westminster, published the first English Collection of Voyages, many of them translated from Spanish and Portuguese voyagers, A.D. 1589. He was the promoter of several of our earliest expeditions to North America, A.D. 1603 and 1605; and aided in founding the Virginian Company. "His name," says William Gifford, "is never to be mentioned without praise and veneration."

improvement thus fostered. Copies of the Bible from the continent were among the first imports; and it became a customary law, that a merchant who had traded three times beyond sea, on his own account and in his own vessel, should be entitled to a thane's rank.

"Wherever monasteries were founded," says Mr. Southey, "marshes were drained, woods were cleared, wastes were brought into cultivation, the means of subsistence were increased, and new comforts were added to life." "A colony of monks," says M. Guizot, "in small numbers at first, transported themselves into some uncultivated place; and there, as missionaries and labourers at once, in the midst of a people as yet pagan, they accomplished their double task with as much of danger as of toil." Their difficulties, too, were doubtless much increased by the number of wild beasts, especially wolves, which then abounded in the country; as is testified by the name *wolf-month*, given by the Saxons to distinguish the month of January. The continual ravages of these fierce creatures on the flocks and herds must have caused an amount of destruction, which at this time and in this country it is not easy to imagine. The monks who went out first into uncultivated spots, must no doubt have gone, as St. Owen of Gloucester went to Lastingham, in a woodman's dress, armed with an axe and mattock, to clear away the forests, and with dogs and spears to guard their stock from the wolf, and their tillage from the wild boar.[7]

[7] Elfric describes the duties of a shepherd in his time, about three centuries after Bede: "In early morning I drive my sheep to their lea, and stand over them in heat and cold, with dogs, lest the wolves swallow them."—*Elfric's Colloquy.* It is said that in the Russian province of Livonia, a few years since, the number of cattle destroyed by wolves was given in a government-return,—horses and foals, 3084; horned cattle and calves, 2540; sheep and lambs, 15,908; swine, 4190; besides a great

But amidst these hard labours, the useful arts were not forgotten. The women who followed this religious plan of life soon became skilful at needlework and embroidery. The monks taught children the common arts of life, and also of carving wood and stone, working in metal, and setting jewels: and jewels in those days were as much used in ornamenting copies of the word of God, as in embellishing the person. And that these arts were not without their value to those who exercised them, may be judged from an old deed of bishop Denbert of Worcester, A.D. 802, in which he grants a lease for life of a farm of two hundred acres, to Eanswitha, an embroideress at Hereford, on condition that she is to renew, and scour, and from time to time add to, the dresses of the priests and ministers who served in the cathedral church. It is also clear that the talents of the best artists were employed very early in England in making ornaments for the churches as well as for the ministers; in adorning the altars, preparing lamps and candlesticks, and more particularly in furnishing communion-vessels, which, even at this early period, were often made of the most costly metals. Of these works some notice will occur, as we speak of eminent persons in the Saxon Church in the following chapters.

But to return, to speak of the faults and defects in the monasteries and religious practices of this age. In the first place, notwithstanding the precautions of Theodore, there was always something too much of a taste for pilgrimages and hermitages. The ancient British Christians, as we learn from St. Jerome, often went to visit the Holy Land; but he speaks as if he thought the practice likely to lead to abuse. "It is

number of goats and kids, and the loss of more than 700 dogs. It is somewhat more than a century since the wolf was finally extirpated in Britain.

as easy," he says, "to find the way to heaven in Britain as at Jerusalem." There were but few of the Saxons at this time who are said to have gone to Jerusalem; but Adamnan, abbot of Iona, in Bede's lifetime, wrote an account of the holy places, which was taken from the description of Palestine given by Arcwolf, a French bishop. Arcwolf had visited Jerusalem and the neighbouring country, Damascus, Constantinople, and Alexandria; and on his return home, being carried by a storm to the coast of Scotland, had happily found shelter at Iona.[8] From him Adamnan received an exact account of Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives, Bethlehem, and the other holy places, as they were at this period, before they were overrun by the Saracens, and while the churches built by the Christian emperor Constantine and his mother St. Helena were in their first beauty. This book Adamnan sent, A.D. 704, to Aldfrid, king of Northumbria, who was a man of learning himself, and did much to encourage learning in his country. It was a very acceptable present to the Northumbrian Christians. However, it does not seem at this time to have kindled in them any desire of visiting Jerusalem, though one or two such pilgrimages are mentioned in this century. The Saxon Christians took all their pilgrimages to Rome. The first eminent person of whom such an act is recorded was Cedwalla, king of Wessex, a young and warlike

[8] No doubt these monasteries on islands, or near dangerous coasts, were often places of refuge to shipwrecked men. The Bell-rock, on which a lighthouse is now erected near the Frith of Forth, is said to owe its name to a bell formerly fixed upon it by the monks of the abbey of Aberbrothock, or Arbroath:

> When the rock was hid by the surge's swell,
> The mariners heard the warning bell;
> And then they knew the perilous rock,
> And bless'd the abbot of Aberbrothock.
>
> SOUTHEY.

prince, who was brought up in paganism; and after making great havoc in Sussex and Kent, was seized with a fit of remorse on hearing something of Christian truth, and determined to go to Rome to be baptised. He was well received there by pope Sergius, A.D. 689; and having been partaker of the rite on Easter Sunday, died within seven days afterwards. His successor, king Ine, or Ina, after a reign of near forty years, followed his steps to Rome in his old age, A.D. 728. And by their example, the fashion of pilgrimages to the see of St. Peter became very popular: noble and simple, laymen and clerks, men and women, all took up this rage, wishing, as Bede says, to live as pilgrims on earth in the neighbourhood of saintly places, that they might be welcomed by the saints when they were called away from their earthly sojourn. Bede, however, did not follow their practice; and as he was well acquainted with the works of St. Jerome, perhaps he knew what the good sense of that plain-spoken father had led him to say about it. "Jerusalem," said he, "is now made a place of resort from all parts of the world; and there is such a throng of pilgrims of both sexes, that all the temptation, which you might in some degree avoid elsewhere, is here collected together." So it fared with these mistaken old English pilgrims. A few years after the death of Bede, Winfrid, an English missionary in Germany, wrote to archbishop Cuthbert to say, that there was then great need to check the practice of pilgrimages; for many, both men and women, only went abroad for the purpose of living licentiously, without the restraints they would find at home, or had been tempted by the vices of the cities in France and Lombardy to fall from the paths of virtue. There were few cities on the way to Rome, he said, where such persons were not to be met with, who were lost both to reli-

gion and their friends. It must, however, be remembered, that these pilgrims were often the persons to bear peaceful messages between warlike nations; and that to them were owing some communications of useful knowledge from Rome and from the East.

With regard to hermitages, the evil which they caused was of a less destructive kind, but one which hindered the pure progress of truth. There can be no doubt that it requires something of devout resolution to undertake such a life as this; there can be no concealed purpose of self-indulgence in it; and all we read of the old English hermits in these or the Norman times, leads us to believe that they were led by sincere though mistaken piety. There is also reason to suppose that while the country was thinly inhabited, and there were few village-churches, the cell of the hermit in a wild region was often the resort of peasants from the neighbouring hamlets, who listened to his preaching, and learnt from him some plain rules of faith and life. And in unsettled times, while the religion of the age gave these retreats a kind of sacred character, the stranger who came to lodge for a night beneath the hermit's roof, and to share his frugal repast, was safer than he could have been in a more public resting-place:

> For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
> His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
> Or do his grey hairs any violence?

It may be said also, that this was one design for which hermitages were founded, in an age when there were no inns except in a few of the principal towns, and the monasteries were the only places of public hospitality. Again, many of these hermits were skilful artificers, who were able to teach the country people some of the arts that would be most useful to them, as basket-making, the construction of

bee-hives, grafting and pruning, and the best ways of gardening. So far all was well. But the best way of honouring God is to keep the path of duty among our fellow-men; and it is not good to be alone. St. Jerome had pointed out some of the dangers of a solitary life, and especially that it is unfavourable to self-knowledge. "Pride soon steals on a man in solitude," he says; "if he has practised fasting for a short time, and has seen nobody, he begins to think that he is a person of consequence, and forgets himself, who he is, and whence he comes, and whither he is going. I do not condemn a solitary life; I have often praised it. But let the soldier of Christ who attempts it be well trained in a monastery first; let him be one who will not be frightened when he finds the hardship of it; who is content to be esteemed the least of all, that he may become the first of all; one who knows how to abound and to suffer need, to deny himself in plenty, as well as to endure hunger; whose dress and speech, and his very look and walk, are a lesson of Christian grace; and who is above the folly of some, who invent wonderful stories of the conflicts of foul spirits with them, that they may make themselves the admiration of the vulgar, and turn it to a gainful trade."

This was the case with some of the first hermits who dwelt in Egypt, in the time of the fathers; and it was too much the case with the early English hermits. Their cells were the nurseries of superstition. It is found that the body, when not fed with sufficient or wholesome food (and the hermits sometimes mixed their flour or pottage with wood-ashes and burnt herbs), deludes the senses with strange dreams by night or day, and the quick vigour of the understanding is lost in wandering imaginations. We are not to suppose that all the wonderful stories of the kind that St. Jerome speaks of were mere imposture;

the persons who recounted them may have believed that they saw and felt the attacks of the great enemy. And there was often something of method in their madness; the strange fancy serving a good moral purpose. Thus it is said, in the life of St. Benedict, that he frightened an idle monk who used to desert the church at the hour of prayer, by saying that he saw a dark cherub hovering over him, and without his knowledge dragging him away to indulge his vagrant habit. Thus among the old English stories, it is told of a vicious man, that being on his way to commit a crime to which he was addicted, he fell through a broken bridge into the river below, and supposed himself to have really gone through the agonies of death before he was rescued. He declared to the bystanders, when he was recovered, that his soul had been separated from his body, and that he had seen the bad and good angels disputing for it; that when neither would resign it, they had agreed that he should be restored to life again, and his sentence should depend upon his choice at that moment, whether to go on to the commission of his crime or to return.

Other stories there are, which shew the progress of opinion towards those errors which at a later time were more generally received. Bede tells a story which had been told to him, of Imma, a Northumbrian, who had been taken prisoner in a battle with the Mercians. His brother Tunna, abbot of a monastery, hearing that he had been slain in that battle, went to the field to search for his body, and carried off by mistake the body of another person. This he had honourably buried; and took care to have many masses said for the deliverance of his soul. The prisoner is said to have found the benefit of these masses in the bodily captivity which he endured: for whenever the earl who held him prisoner ordered

him to be kept in bonds, the fetters and manacles were shortly afterwards discovered to have fallen from his limbs. Many persons, says Bede, were persuaded by this story to pray and give alms, or to procure masses to be said, for the rescue of their friends who had departed this life; for they understood from it that the sacrifice of the altar was able to procure eternal redemption both of soul and body.

Of the same kind is the vision which the famous Alcuin of York tells us, of Walter, a hermit who seems to have lived at Flamborough Head. He saw, as he dreamed or fancied, the ghost of a priest followed through the air by a host of foul fiends, who were endeavouring to seize it, and to drag it to the place of torments. The sin for which he was thus harassed was, that he had kept back one of his offences unconfessed in his prayers. "Thirty days have I been chased to and fro in the air," said the ghost to the hermit, "and this is the last day allowed; if I cannot now obtain some good man's prayers, I am lost for ever." The hermit prayed for him, and believed he was released.

It might be supposed, from the first of these stories, that the Saxons at this early period believed, as the Church of Rome does now, that there was a place called purgatory, where the souls of those who have been on earth, as the northern proverb is, "over bad for blessing, and over good for banning," are to be kept till the prayers and masses of the living set them free. But it would be a mistake to think that this opinion was at all an article of their faith; they had only some uncertain notions about the cleansing which an imperfect soul was to undergo after death, before it could be received into paradise. They founded these notions upon the words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 13-15. There were some who

thought that the fire there spoken of should be at the day of judgment. "Then," says an old Saxon preacher, "our Lord cometh to doom all mankind, not in heaven, nor yet in earth, but in the midst of the two, in the welkin. Fire cometh before him, as the prophet saith (Ps. l. 3), and shall burn up his enemies round about him. Fire burneth the earth, and all that is thereupon; and cleanseth all faithful men of all sins that they have fore-let (left off), or amended, or begun to amend, and maketh them seven-fold brighter than the sun." This was an old interpretation of some of the fathers, and has little danger in 't. But another was, that there was such a cleansing fire prepared after death for all little sins which did not destroy the habit of faith, or make a man lead a life altogether irreligious. Of this last Bede speaks tenderly, because pope Gregory, who had been so great a benefactor to this country, had rather favoured it. "I do not dispute against it," he says; "for possibly it may be true." We are not therefore to suppose, that he, or all the Saxon Christians of his time, heartily believed in such a purgatory, or thought the story of Imma and his wonderful masses as true as the gospel. It is plain, that Bede did not himself believe that alms or masses could change the state of the dead; and indeed the story itself only goes to prove, that the prayers used at the mass[9] or Lord's supper, for all that were in trouble or adversity, as we now pray, might profit the living. "God," says Bede, "has made heaven the seat of truth and happiness; he has given a place for inquiry and repentance upon earth; but misery and despair are the portions of hell."

So also Alcuin, though he tells the above story of hermit Walter, did not himself believe that prayer

[9] *Mass* in the old English or Saxon language meant *a feast*—the holy feast of the Lord's supper.

could help one who had died without repentance. "He that hideth his sins," he says in one of his sermons, "and is ashamed to make a healthy confession, God is now a witness of them, and will hereafter punish them. Confession, with true penitence, is the angels' medicine for our sins. God's mild-hearted pity helpeth them that now repent; but in death there is no repentance." And Egbert, archbishop of York, says of the practices which the story of Imma had led to: "He who fasteth for the dead, it is a comfort to himself, if it helpeth not the dead: God only knows whether his dead are helped by it."

The common belief, however, was, in early Saxon times, that there were four places for the departed spirits; as they had it taught them in the famous vision of Drythelm, the hermit of Melrose, which was very popular in old England, and may be read with some interest still. Drythelm was a religious man, a thane or gentleman, living with his wife and family at Cunningham, now within the Scottish border. One night, in a fit of long sickness, he appeared to have breathed his last; but at the dawn of day, to the great alarm of those who were weeping round his bed, he recovered and sat up. His wife was the only one who had courage to stay in the room; but he comforted her by saying there was nothing to fear; he had indeed been restored from death to life, and must for the future live a very different man from what he had been before. He arose immediately, went to the village-church, and remained some time in prayer; then returning home, divided his substance into three portions, one of which he gave to his wife, the second to his sons, and distributed the third in alms to the poor. In a few days afterwards he went to Melrose Abbey, took the habit of a monk, and retiring for the rest of his life

to a hermitage given him by the abbot, kept himself to such hard discipline of mind and body, that it was plain, says Bede, even before you had heard his tale, that he had seen more than other folk.

He told how, in the space of time while he lay as dead, he seemed to be guided by one of shining countenance and bright array towards the north-eastern quarter of the sky.[10] Here first he saw a wide and hollow dell, without a bound to its length, in which the souls of men were tossed from burning flames on one side to driving snow and hail on the other. This, his guide afterwards told him, was a place for trying and cleansing the souls of those who had put off repentance; but those, however, if they had repented in the hour of death, would at the day of judgment come to heaven's bliss; and the prayers, alms, and fasting of their living friends, and especially the observing of masses, would help many out of that place before. Beyond this, he saw a place which, from the more dismal sights and sounds it offered to his senses, he knew to be the mouth of the bottomless pit. Here his guide for a time seemed to desert him; but just as the dark spirits from the abyss were about to seize upon him, he saw at a distance a star advancing through the gloom, at whose approach they fled. It was soon seen to be his guide returning, who then led him to the south-east into a region of pure and lightsome

[10] It was the belief of many in the early Church, that the seat of Christ was in the east, and from thence he should come to judgment. See St. Matt. xxiv. 27. "Let us think that Christ dyed in the este, and therefore let us pray into the este, that we may be of the nombre that he died for. Also let us think that he shall come out of the este to the doom." *Old Engl. Homily on Wake-days.* On the contrary, they held that the realm of Satan was to the north, from Isa. xiv. 13. Purgatory, therefore, to which Drythelm first approached, lay between the two.

air. Here first he saw before him a long high wall, to which there was neither entrance nor window, nor any means of ascent; but with his guide he found himself at the top, in a wide and pleasant plain, full of spring-flowers, and inhabited by crowds of spirits bright and fair. This seems to have been what the Saxons called paradise, or the fields of rest, which they supposed to be situated between heaven and earth, and was a place for good men, who were yet not perfect enough to be admitted into heaven at once. He was then led on to another abode, round which a far brighter light was spread, and from which he heard the sound of the sweetest songs, and sweeter fragrance breathed from it than he had perceived in the pleasant fields before; but just as he was hoping to enter into the joyful place, his guide stopped, and turning round led him back by the way by which he came.

This strange vision, in which wild fancies and hurtful superstition have mixed with them some shadows of noble truth, had such an effect on poor Drythelm, that he determined to put his aged body to such mortifications as in all likelihood must soon have worn out his life. His cell near Melrose was on the banks of the Tweed, into which river he would frequently go down, and, standing in the water up to his waist, or sometimes up to his neck, repeat his prayers or psalms as long as he could bear the cold; and when he came out would never change his cold and wet garments, leaving them to be warmed and dried by the action of his body. Sometimes in winter, when the Tweed came down with broken particles of ice, he would still pursue the same rigours; and if any of his friends were amazed at his endurance, his answer was, "I have seen a colder place and harder discipline than this."

It is to be feared, therefore, that though some

persons of better understanding did not put much value on such visions and tales as these, they had a great influence on the mind of the people. There was a great reverence felt for hermits, and wonderful things were told of them. Some were certainly men who joined active labours to their solitary life; as the famous St. CUTHBERT, who, after living many years as abbot of Melrose, where he did not confine his labours to the walls of his monastery, but often spent days and weeks in preaching to the people in the hamlets and mountainous districts round, at length retired to live in the little solitary island of Farne, in the midst of the sea, off the coast of Northumberland. From this retreat he was drawn by king Egfrid, A.D. 684, to be made bishop of Lindisfarne. This office he undertook very unwillingly; but when he was in it, discharged his duty like a man who was influenced by love to God and to his neighbour, till, finding his end was near, he went back to his cell to die. When he used to celebrate the holy communion, says Bede, he shewed his devotion, not by lifting up his voice, but with earnest tears commending his vows to God. His life in his retirement was not without labour; as he had to build first a cell for himself, then, with the help of other monks, a small monastery and church, to dig a well, as there was no fresh water there, and to dig and plough the land.

It was not uncommon for some of those who had, like Cuthbert, done their part in the charge of monasteries, to choose such retirement after labour. But there were others who seem to have been led only by a mistaken piety to afflict their souls, and shut themselves out from the community of their fellows. Walter of Flamborough Head chose out a cliff which overhung the sea; a narrow path led to it, and here the spirits of the air seemed to come to tempt him, and gave him matter for such stories as St. Jerome

complains of. Guthlac of Croyland, living on a hermitage in the midst of swamps and marshes, often thought he was summoned to battle with foul fiends, when he saw the wisp-fires in the night. Etha of Crayke dwelt on a lonely hill surrounded with a deep forest, so thick, that, according to old tradition, a squirrel could hop from thence to York from bough to bough. "Here in the depth of the wilderness," says Alcuin, "he led an angelical life:" but an angelical life is best described by good archbishop Leighton, "a life spent between ascending in prayer to fetch blessings from above, and descending to scatter them among men." In this last part the life of a solitary must fail. And as it was well said by one of old, he who can live in solitude must be either a wild beast or a god; it is not a life for man. It is therefore to be regretted that this life was in so much honour with our Christian forefathers. These half madmen, who dreamed dreams, and saw phantoms of their own imagination,

> distracted in their mind,
> Forsook by heaven, forsaking human kind,

were accounted by the people as prophets almost inspired. Though there were some who may have gone out to the wilds and wastes with better purpose, to reclaim the rude people who were farthest from means of grace and unacquainted with useful arts, the sort of life they led was not good for themselves. The hermits, much more than the monasteries, were chargeable with promoting superstitions; which among a people newly reclaimed from heathenism, and having been used to place great faith in charms and spells, and fables of the unseen world, were very hurtful to the progress of purer truth.

CHAPTER VII.

EMINENT TEACHERS OF THE EARLY ENGLISH CHURCH: ALDHELM, BISHOP OF SHERBORNE; ACCA, BISHOP OF HEXHAM; AND THE VENERABLE BEDE.

Such persons, who served God by holy living, industrious preaching, and religious dying, ought to have their names preserved in honour, and their holy doctrines and lives published and imitated.

BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

ADRIAN, abbot of Canterbury, the fellow-labourer of Theodore, survived his friend for many years, dying A.D. 710, forty-one years after his first arrival in England. All this time he was employed in teaching the young Saxons, who were to fill high offices in the Church. Among his pupils were Bertwald, abbot of Reculver, who afterwards succeeded Theodore as archbishop of Canterbury, where he presided nearly forty years; Tobias, bishop of Rochester, a man of great learning and piety; and Alcuin, afterwards abbot of Canterbury, who aided Bede in his History of the Church.[1] Another was Aldhelm, one of the royal family of Wes-

[1] Alcuin of Canterbury is often confounded, by Warton and others, with Alcuin of York, who flourished about fifty years later. See Chapter IX.

sex, afterwards abbot of Malmsbury and bishop of Sherborne, a man who conferred great benefits upon his countrymen the West Saxons, and whose memory was honoured in a life of him written by the great king Alfred.

ALDHELM was indeed a man who deserved this honour; and it is a great pity we have not his life by Alfred now remaining to us, instead of such accounts as the monks of later ages have mixed up with too many legendary tales. He was the founder of the abbey of Malmsbury, and of the town adjoining; for many of our old English towns arose, like this, from the neighbourhood of the monastery. His own wealth and interest enabled him to endow it with a good estate, so large that it is said it would take a man a good part of the day, if he set out early in the morning, to go round the borders. Here he built two churches, one within the monastery, one without its walls, for the villagers or townspeople; and at different periods of his life he built other churches in Wessex, particularly at Dorchester, Dorset. At this period the organ is said to have been first used in churches by Vitalian, the pope whom we have seen engaging himself in the mission of Theodore. And the first organ used in England seems to have been built under the directions of Aldhelm, who has left in his writings a description of it in verse, as "a mighty instrument with innumerable tones, blown with bellows, and enclosed in a gilded case." The instrument, however, which was most in use among the Saxons was the harp, as it was also the instrument of the ancient Britons and Irish, and of the Danes and other tribes of the North. The kings thought it a part of their state to entertain harpers at their court; and before the introduction of Christianity and letters, those who sung to the

harp, called scalds or minstrels, were the only historians of the past, singing songs of the warlike deeds of their forefathers. It was still, after the gospel was known, considered almost a necessary accomplishment of the educated in the middle ranks of society to be ready to sing a song at an entertainment, when the harp was passed round. This custom and practice Aldhelm endeavoured to reform, or to adapt to the service of religion. When he resided as abbot at Malmsbury, finding that the half-barbarous country-people, who came to hear divine service, were in a great hurry to return home without paying much attention to the sermon, he used to go and take his seat, with harp in hand, on the bridge over the Avon, and offer to teach the art of singing. Here a crowd soon gathered round him; and after he had indulged the common taste by singing some trifling song, by degrees he drew them on to more serious matter, and succeeded at last in making them sing David's psalms to David's strings.

The good service of Aldhelm in this particular is now placed beyond a doubt by the late discovery of a Saxon version of the Psalms, which seems to have been preserved in an old French monastery, founded by John duke of Berri, at Bourges, A.D. 1405. This prince, who was brother to Charles V. king of France, gave the book with many others to his monastery, where it remained without being of much use to the French monks, who thought the old English letters were Hebrew. But somehow or other, it has escaped all the French revolutions since, and is now in the French king's library at Paris; from which a copy has lately been taken and printed by the University of Oxford, A.D. 1835.

The writer who made this copy of the Saxon Psalter was an Englishman, who seems to have lived about A.D. 1000. The first fifty of the Psalms are in prose, and the rest in verse. It is likely that the version is altogether Aldhelm's: at least there is no reason to doubt that the metrical part is his. In one or two places he seems to speak as if he aimed to suit the meaning of the psalm to the way of worship and customs observed in the monasteries. Thus, in the eighty-fourth psalm his version in modern English is nearly this:

Lord, to me thy minsters are
Courts of honour, passing fair;
And my spirit deems it well
There to be, and there to dwell:
Heart and flesh would fain be there,
Lord, thy life, thy love to share.

There the sparrow speeds her home,
And in time the turtles come,
Safe their nestling young they rear,
Lord of hosts, thine altars near;
Dear to them thy peace,—but more
To the souls who there adore. *Ver.* 1-5.

Again, in the sixty-eighth:

God the word of wisdom gave;
Preachers, who his voice have heard,
Taught by him, in meekness brave,
Speed the message of that word.

Mighty King, with beauty crown'd!
In his house the world's proud spoil,
Oft in alms-deeds dealt around,
Cheers the poor wayfarer's toil.

If among his clerks you rest,
Silver plumes shall you enfold,
Fairer than the culver's breast.
Brighter than her back of gold. *Ver.* 11-13.

When Aldhelm wrote, there were no copies of the Hebrew Psalter in England, and in the last of

these verses he seems to have mistaken a word in the Greek or Latin version of the Psalms; but in many places, where the meaning is more plain, his verse is both true and full of good poetry, and it is every where marked by a spirit of devotion, breaking forth into words of thankful wonder and praise; and the mistakes which here and there occur in the sense, are not such as to have taught any false doctrine. The version of the Psalms, therefore, into their own language, and adapted to their own national melody to accompany the harp, was a most valuable gift to the Saxons. The words in the last verse seem here to invite the hearer to take up his abode among God's clerks in a monastery; and, in the second to speak of the alms, or doles of food and clothing, which the charity of Christians in those days gave away at the gates of religious houses. The words were prompted by the state of religious society at that time.

Again, in some of the Psalms he speaks of the peace-stool, or stone seat, which was placed near the altar in some old English churches, as a place of refuge, to which, by king Alfred's laws, if an accused person fled, he was not to be disturbed for seven days.[2] The intention of the law was, to give a culprit opportunity to confess his crime to the bishop or clergyman, in which case the fine, commonly paid for all offences in Saxon times, was, mitigated. "God," says this version, Ps. ix. 9, "is the place of peace to the poor." "The Lord God is become my peace-stool; my help is fast fixed and established in the Lord," Ps. xciv. 22. It can easily be imagined how this way of speaking was suited to the understanding and affections of the people among whom such a custom prevailed.

[2] An ancient peace-stool is still preserved in the minster of Beverley.

It is a singular proof of the great eagerness for learning in these days, that Aldhelm had two kings of North Britain for his correspondents, Aldfrid the Wise, as he was called, king of Northumbria, and Arcivil, or Archibald, a king of the Scots; to whom he sent some of his writings, and who had sufficient acquirements to value them. He also corresponded with learned men, not only in his own country, but abroad; particularly Cellan, an Irish monk, who lived a hermit's life in France. He was one of many Saxons who at this time visited Rome; going both from a feeling of devotion, and in pursuit of knowledge. There he became a proficient in the study of the Roman law, and also gained a good acquaintance with the poetry of the Romans, so as to write verses with ease and elegance in their language. This is an art now taught in almost every grammar-school; but it is a great credit to Aldhelm, that he was the first Englishman who mastered it. What is much more to his praise, is, that he employed his talents in works designed to set forth the glory of God; and as his mind was enlarged by study and travel, he spoke with deeper feeling of the things in heaven and earth. It is impossible to give the simple force of his verse in modern English metre; but the following passages may serve as a specimen of his turn of thought:

Where the tempest wakes to wrath
  Many waters wide and far,
On the ocean's dreadful path,
  Loud and high their voices are:

Wondrous ways those waters move,
  Where the sea-streams swiftest flow;
But more wondrous far above,
  Holy Lord, thy glories shew.

Ps. xciii. 3, 4.

As the beacon-fire by night,
  That the host of Israel led;

Such the glory, fair and bright,
Round the good man's dying bed:
'Tis a beacon bright and fair,
Telling that the Lord is there.
Ps. cxvi. 15.

King Ina of Wessex being now at peace with Gerent, or Grant, the Welch king of Cornwall, a council of the Saxon Church was held about the year A.D. 700, in which Aldhelm was appointed to write a letter to that prince, to exhort him to adopt the Roman rule for Easter, and to conform to the other practices of the Saxon Christians. It appears from his letter, that the Welch of South Wales at this time would neither pray in the same church, nor eat at the same table with a Saxon; they would throw the food which a Saxon had cooked to the dogs, and rinse the cups which a Saxon had used with sand or ashes, before they would drink out of them: if a Saxon went to sojourn among them, they put him to a penance or quarantine of forty days, before they would shew him any kindness or act of good neighbourhood. Of this Aldhelm complained, as a man of peace and charity might complain; but he seems to have laid too much stress on some trifling differences, which he pressed the Welch clergy to adopt, particularly a mode of shaving the head, in imitation of our Saviour's crown of thorns, which they called St. Peter's tonsure. He seems also to have thought that there was something of necessity laid upon all Christians to follow the statutes of the Church founded by St. Peter. He acknowledges that the Welch Christians at this time held all the doctrines of the catholic faith, but tells them their want of charity will destroy the benefit they would otherwise receive from it; "for a true faith and brotherly love," he says, "always go hand in hand." This is true; but the Welch Church might justly have answered, It is for you, Saxons, who came last into a

country where there was an independent Christian Church, rather, by the rule of charity, to conform to us; but if not, at least not to require from us any thing more than the profession of that catholic faith, which, as it is sufficient for salvation, should be enough to secure to all fellow-Christians communion with each other. Aldhelm, however, though his arguments were not all sound, wrote with a spirit of kindness; and peace was preserved between Ina and Grant as long as Aldhelm was alive. He died A.D. 709, in the discharge of his duty, as he was visiting his diocese. Finding a mortal stroke upon him, he caused his attendants to remove him into the nearest village-church—a little wooden church at Doulting, near Shepton-Mallet in Somersetshire,—where, commending his soul to God, he tranquilly breathed his last.

In the early wars between the Saxons and the Welch, while the Saxons were yet pagans, it is to be feared that the prisoners whom they took were all made slaves; but now the introduction of Christianity made a difference. In the laws of king Ina, we find the Welch in Somerset and Devonshire were allowed to keep possession of their lands, and to live as the king's subjects like the Saxons. Accordingly, these districts, as well as Cornwall, continued long after to be called the Welch districts:[3] only, a wise precaution was now taken to prevent them, under a heavy fine, from entering into a deadly feud with an Englishman; for there would be danger that a private war, or duel, would lead to a general discord between the two nations. It was the rude warlike disposition of the old Saxons, which made this kind of private war very common; and their laws, long

[3] King Alfred's Will, about A.D. 880.

after the introduction of Christianity, did not entirely put it down, appointing no other punishment, when a man was slain in a quarrel, than that the slayer should pay a fine to the king, and another to the nearest relations of the slain. If the man was unable to pay this, or any other fine, for an offence, he lost his freedom. The slaves, however, among the Saxons, were not, as among the old Greeks and Romans, made to dwell under one roof, or to work in gangs: every slave had a cottage to himself on his master's estate, and tilled a portion of land, for which he paid rent, commonly in kind, furnishing his master with a given quantity of wheat or other grain, poultry, butter, and eggs; or, if he had charge of pasture, with oxen or sheep. His slavery consisted in his not being able to quit his occupation like a free tenant: he was a slave to the soil where he laboured. Thus, when landlords gave their slaves liberty, the ceremony was, to take them to a place where four roads met, and bid them go where they pleased: but Bertwald, archbishop of Canterbury, to give more solemnity to this ceremony, at a synod held at Berkhamstead, A.D. 697, directed that the master should bring his slave to church, and declare his freedom before the altar.

In these LAWS OF KING INA, which, he says in the preamble, were drawn up with the advice and instruction of Hedda, bishop of Winchester, and Erconwald, bishop of London, as well as his earls and wise counsellors, there are several marks—besides the good policy shewn towards his Welch subjects—of improvements suggested by Christianity. If a master made a slave to work on Sunday, the slave was to have his liberty, and the master to be fined. If he worked by his own choice, he was to pay a fine himself, or to be whipped. A free labourer

was to pay a heavier fine, or to lose his liberty. A priest who broke this law was to incur a double penalty. So strictly did these Christian legislators provide for the observance of the Lord's day. If a slave had committed some offence, for which he incurred a whipping, and ran for refuge to a church, he was to be forgiven. A woman, who took up and nursed a child which had been exposed, was to receive an increasing allowance of public money from year to year, till the child grew up. It would seem from this, that it was not uncommon for a poor pagan mother to forsake her child; as is still the case in countries where paganism prevails. It had been also the custom of the old Saxons, in their rude law, if a man was convicted of theft, to condemn his whole family to slavery with him; so that, as one of their early Christian lawgivers speaks of it, "the child that lay in the cradle, and had never bitten meat, was made as much answerable as if it had known all that was done." The laws of Ina forbade that any child, under ten years of age, should be held accountable; and enacted, what was afterwards repeated in the laws of later kings, that the wife should not be made to share her husband's punishment, unless it could be proved that she had locked up the stolen property in some private cupboard or store-place of her own.[4] Another law speaks of one of those practices, embittering the lot of slavery, to which allusion has already been made in the story of St. Bavon,[5] and which was not entirely abolished in England before the Norman Conquest: "If any man sell his own countryman, be he slave or free, although he be guilty of some crime, and send him beyond sea, he shall pay

[4] It appears that every good Saxon housewife, in ordinary life, had three locks and keys under her charge; that of her store-room or closet, her linen-chest, and her money-box.

[5] See p. 27.

the value of his life, and make deep amends to God." There were pirates who visited the coast, and merchants, as they were called, at London, Bristol, and other places, who were ready to give a price for their fellow-men, to carry them to a slave-market abroad. In the time of paganism this traffic was allowed; and it was a common thing for the earls, or thanes, to carry the prisoners they had taken in their little wars to London, to sell them to some Frieslander or Italian, and ship them off to foreign climes. It was now forbidden, under a heavy penalty; but as long as slavery continued, there would often be a temptation to an oppressive master to get rid of a troublesome slave, or such as overburdened his land, by this kind of transportation. It is likely also, that, as the law above speaks of one who had been guilty of some crime, the mode of turning culprits into land-slaves was calculated to fill the country with thieves and depredators, whom it would be inconvenient for a landlord to keep as tenants. As to the last clause of it, which made it necessary for the offender to do penance, it was a piece of godly discipline: it was fit that, for such an offence, he should forfeit his right to Christian communion; and we may well admire the spirit of our forefathers, who took such pains to make Christianity a part and parcel of the law of the land.

These laws also enact that every child should be brought to be baptised within thirty days after its birth, under penalty of forfeiting its inheritance. And godfathers and godmothers appear to have considered the tie which they contracted for the child at the font to put them in the place of natural relations. Thus earl Osric, a nobleman of Wessex, in punishing some traitors who had slain king Cynewolf, A.D. 784, spared the life of one who was his godson, though he had been wounded by him in

battle. A more remarkable instance of this feeling was shewn afterwards by king Alfred, when in his Danish wars having taken prisoners the two sons of Hasten the Dane, A.D. 894, he immediately set them free, to be restored to their father without ransom, because he had stood godfather to one, and an earl of his court to the other. These were feelings which may put to shame an age when this sacred tie is so near to be forgotten.

While the kingdom of Wessex was thus learning to put on the yoke of Christ in the south of England, the labours of other eminent Christians advanced the knowledge of the truth still more effectually in the north. Among these were ACCA, bishop of Hexham, and the Venerable BEDE. Acca was the builder of a noble church at Hexham, which he ornamented with many precious gifts; and there he also collected a valuable library of books, particularly of lives of saints and martyrs who had served God by holy living and dying. He was also, like Aldhelm, an expert musician, and took great pains in providing for this part of the public service by securing good teachers for his choir. It must be observed, that the hymns and prayers commonly used in the churches of the Saxons were in the Latin language, as was taught by the first missionaries from Rome; but often in the daily service they chanted the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and many portions of the Psalms, in their own tongue. And it seems, from some copies of their daily service now remaining, that these portions were taken from Aldhelm's version. Every priest also was enjoined to teach the people the Creed and the Lord's Prayer in English. It is to be regretted that the prayers were not altogether in the language of the people, who must have listened to them at best in the state of mind described by St. Paul, "their

spirit might have prayed, but their understanding was unfruitful." Afterwards this evil increased, as the old Saxon or English language grew out of use in the Norman times, and nothing but the Latin remained. Another custom, which Acca and others zealously introduced into their churches, was the adorning of the side-walls with little tabernacles or shrines, arching over altars in honour of apostles and martyrs; at which the people often knelt in prayer, and on which were placed little caskets containing relics of such holy persons, to whom they either did or were imagined to belong. This practice had been attempted in the time of St. Ambrose, A.D. 370-390; when the Roman emperor Theodosius made a law to forbid persons to rob graves under pretence of removing the bones of martyrs; advising them rather to build churches over their burial-places, and to leave the remains undisturbed. Afterwards, however, this superstition gained ground; and the Saxons, who had learnt it from pope Gregory's missionaries, soon had many stories prevalent about miracles shewn at the place where holy men had died, or where their relics were deposited. It was also a dangerous practice to allow any altars in churches beside that which was set apart for the only Christian sacrifice. This custom was early received among the Saxons; and in A.D. 780, when archbishop Albert consecrated a new and spacious church at York, it contained no fewer than thirty altars. In other respects, Acca did good service in adorning the holy place with candlesticks and holy vessels, and in the pains he took to promote church-music, which by his instructions became very general in the north.

It may perhaps serve to give the English reader a notion of the psalmody of the Anglo-Saxon Church, if we here insert a nearly literal rendering of the

Apostles' Creed from the ancient measure in which it was sung to the harp in their church-service:

Father of unchanging might,
Set above the welkin's height,
Who the unsullied tracts of air
Didst in their own space prepare,
And the solid earth more fast
With its deep foundations cast,—
Thee, the Everlasting One,
With believing heart I own.
Life itself from Thee had birth,
Lord of angels, King of earth;
Thou the ocean's mighty deep
In its pathless caves dost keep;
And the countless stars that glow,
Thou their power and names dost know.

And with faith assur'd I own,
Lord, thy true and only Son,
King of might to heal and save;
Whom thy pitying mercy gave
Hither for our help to come
From the blissful angels' home.
Gabriel, on thine errand sent,
Through the crystal firmament
Glancing with the speed of thought,
Thy behest to Mary brought.
She, the virgin pure and blest,
Freely bowed to thy behest,
And the Father's wondrous pow'r
Prais'd in that rejoicing hour.
There no earth-born lust had room:
Spotless was that maiden's womb,
As a casket meet to bear,
Brightest gem, heav'n's first-born heir.
But such bliss as angels know
Thy pure Spirit did bestow;
And the maid and mother mild
Gave to earth her heaven-born child,
Born as man, our needs to prove,
Maker of the hosts above!
Heavenly comfort at his birth
Dawn'd upon the sons of earth;

And by David's lowly town
Angels brought glad tidings down,
That the Healer of all woe
Sojourn'd now with men below.

Then, when under men of Rome
Pilate held the power to doom,
Our dear Lord gave up his breath,
Bore the bitter throes of death
On the rood as sinners die,
King of endless majesty!
Sadly Joseph made his grave
In his own sepulchral cave:
But his soul was gone to quell
Foes that held the spoil of hell
In the fiery cells that keep
Spirits long imprison'd deep,
Whom his summons call'd away
To their home in upper day.[6]

Then, when came the third day's light,
Rose again the Lord of might;
Freshly from his clay-cold bed,
King of light and life he sped
Forty days his followers true
To his heavenly lore he drew
Holy *runes*[7] unfolding, ne'er
Heard before by mortal ear;
Till his hour to reign was come,
And he sought his glorious home:
But his promise left to man,
From the hour that reign began,
That no more distraught with dread
Faithful men his ways should tread;

[6] It seems to have been the belief of some of the early Saxon Christians, that the soul of our blessed Saviour descended into the place of torments; (Calvin and Bishop Latimer had this belief;) and that he set free from thence the souls of Adam and Eve and others, who were held captives by Satan till that time. This was called in early times, *The Harrowing of Heli.* It was the belief of Cædmon, who describes it in his Paraphrase, ii. § 8; and it appears to have been the belief of the author of this version of the Creed.

[7] *Runes*, mysteries: alluding to Acts i. 3.

But with patience standing fast,
Of his free deliverance taste.

I the Spirit of all grace
With unswerving faith embrace,
Whom the tongues of nations own,
With the Father and the Son,
Everlasting God. Though three
Named by name, yet one they be;
One the Godhead, one alone,
Whom in differing names we own.
Faith receives the mystery,
Yielding truth the victory.
Wheresoe'er the world is spread,
Lord, thy glory-gifts are shed,
To thy saints in wonders shewn;
And eternal is thy throne.

Furthermore, I keep and hold,
Ever-loved of God, the fold
Of his faithful ones, that are
Ever the good Shepherd's care,
That true Church, that to heaven's King
Doth accordant praises sing:
And the fellowship bestow'd
To the saints on earth's abode,
With the souls that dwell with God.

Free forgiveness for each sin
Penitent I hope to win:
And with faith assured, I trust
That this flesh, return'd to dust,
Shall arise, with all the dead,
At the day of doom and dread:
When our endless state shall be,
Judge of all men, fix'd by Thee,
As on earth our works are still
Measured by our Maker's will.[s]

Such was probably in substance the creed which was sung in the choirs at Malmsbury and Hexham in the seventh century. But the most eminent Christian teacher of the time was the VENERABLE

[s] Elstob's Anglo-Saxon Hours, p. 21.

Bede, to whom bishop Acca owes all the knowledge we have of his life and labours, and without whom the English Church would be left with little information as to its early history.

[JARROW CHURCH.]

Bede was born about the year of our Lord 671, on the domain of the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow; and at the age of seven, being, as it seems, an orphan, was entrusted by his nearest relations to the care of the abbot Biscop to be educated. From that time he never left the monastery; but as he grew up, employed all his time in studying the Scriptures, observing the rule of discipline of the religious house, and the daily service of psalmody in the church: "for," he says, "I found it delightful always either to learn, to teach, or to write." When he was aged eighteen he was ordained a deacon, and at thirty a priest, by John, bishop of York, first founder of the minster at Beverley. At the request of his friend Acca, he undertook to write a large commentary on the greater part of the books of Scripture, selected from the writings of the Christian fathers, and with many additions of his own: a

work of great labour and value. Besides this, he wrote many treatises, and letters to friends, on religious and moral subjects, on the nature of the world, on the art of calculating time, and on metre; a great number of sermons or homilies; and a history of the Church of England from the mission of Gregory to his own time, from which the greater part of the information contained in the foregoing pages has been extracted.

At the age of sixty-three, A.D. 735, this faithful servant of God received his summons to a better world. He was seized at the latter end of March, about a fortnight before Easter, with a shortness of breath, unaccompanied by other pain, but which he perceived to have in it the symptoms of mortal disease. He lived on till the eve of Ascension-day, May 26, in continual prayers and thanksgivings, still giving daily instructions to his pupils, and discoursing with them; and at night, when his disorder allowed him but short intervals of rest, watched only to utter psalms of praise. He had often on his tongue the words of St. Paul, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" and other texts of Scripture,—by which he admonished his hearers to awake from the sleep of the soul, by thinking beforehand of their last hour. To the same purpose he repeated some solemn verses in the old Saxon language:

Ere the pilgrim soul go forth
On its journey far and lone,
Who is he, that yet on earth
All his needful part hath done?

Who foreweighs the joy or scathe
That his parted ghost shall know,
Endless, when the day of death
Seals his doom for weal or woe?

He also repeated some of the collects used in the

service of the Church, particularly that of which he was reminded by the holy season of the Lord's ascension: "O King of glory, Lord of might, who didst this day ascend in triumph above all the heavens; we beseech thee, leave us not orphans, but send to us the promise of the Father, the Spirit of truth. Praised be thy name!" When he came to the words, "leave us not orphans," he burst into tears, remembering perhaps how the God of the fatherless had been his protector from his youth, and continued for some time weeping and silently pouring out his heart to his heavenly Benefactor; while all who were with him mingled their tears with his. Often he said with thankfulness, "God scourgeth every son whom he receiveth;" and spoke with gladness of the mercy that was shewn him in the infirmity which he was now counted worthy to suffer. Of his approaching departure he said, in the words of St. Ambrose, "I have not so lived as that I should be unwilling to live longer among you; but neither do I fear to die, for we have a merciful God."

All the time of his sickness he was still employed upon two works; one, a set of extracts from the writings of Isidore, bishop of Seville, which he thought valuable, but requiring selection, — and "I do not wish my boys," he said, meaning his pupils, "to be employed after my death in reading what is unprofitable;" the other, a translation of the Gospel of St. John into the old English or Saxon language. On Tuesday before Ascension-day his breathing became more difficult, and his feet began slightly to swell; yet he continued all day to teach and dictate to his pupils with his usual cheerfulness, saying sometimes, "Learn your best to-day; for I know not how long I may last, or how soon my Maker may call me away." His pupils perceived that he

foresaw his end approaching. He lay down to rest that night, but passed it without sleep, in prayer and thanksgiving.

At the dawn of the next day, he called his young companions, and bade them lose no time in writing the rest of the task he had begun with them. So they continued employed till nine o'clock, when, as the office of the day required, they went in procession with the relics of the saints. One, however, remained with him; but fearing it might be too much for his weakness, he said, "There is still, my dear master, one chapter wanting to complete the translation; but I must not ask you to dictate any more." "Nay," said Bede, "it is easy to me. Take your pen and write; only lose no time." He did so, and the work was nearly finished; when, about three o'clock in the afternoon Bede called to Cuthbert, afterwards abbot of Jarrow, who wrote the account of his death: "I have," said he, "in my little private chest some few valuables, some pepper, frankincense, and a few scarfs;[9] run speedily, and bring the priests of our monastery to me, that I may distribute to them such little gifts as God has put it into my power to give." While he did so, he begged them to offer masses for him, and to remember him in their prayers; which they readily promised. "It is now time," he said, "that I should return to Him who created me. I have lived long, and my merciful Judge has well provided for me the kind of life I have led. I feel the hour of my freedom is at hand, and I desire to be released and to be with Christ." Thus he passed the time in peace and holy joy till the evening. The youth, who had before attended him, then wishing to have the work completed, once

[9] Pepper, being then a scarce foreign produce, was a valuable spice. A silken scarf, or handkerchief, in old English times was a common gift of affection and friendship.

more reminded him that the last sentence still remained. "Write quickly, then," said Bede, and gave him the closing words. "It is now finished," said the youth, when he had set them down. "You say well," replied Bede, "it is finished! Support my head between thy hands, and let me, while I sit, still look towards the holy place in which I used to pray, that though I can no longer kneel, I may still call upon my Father." Shortly afterwards he sunk from his seat to the floor of his cell, and uttering his last hymn of praise, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," when he had named the name of the Blessed Spirit he breathed away his gentle soul.

No man had a purer love of holiness, or lived in more entire dependence upon divine grace, than Bede. "Who," said he, "shall dare to boast of the power of nature, and the freedom of the will to good? If I had not the words of the apostle to teach me, my own roving thoughts might warn me, that the soul's motions are not free. How often, when I have desired and striven earnestly to fix my mind in prayer, have I not been able! Yet, if the soul were free, it would be my choice to keep it intently fixed in the time of prayer, just as I can with ease place my body in the place and in the posture in which prayer is made."

With regard to his desire that prayers should be said for him and masses offered after he was dead, it is plain, that he did not ask for them in expectation that they would help his soul out of purgatory, for he died in joyful confidence that his labours had been accepted, and that he should be soon with Christ. He believed that in the holy communion it was fit that a remembrance should be made of the faithful departed, and that God should be entreated to keep them, as it is his will, in mercy and peace

until the resurrection of the last day. It were well if such a prayer had never been perverted to dangerous superstitions, and if it had been thus retained, as it was in the first communion-service put forth for the use of the English Church after the Reformation, the first prayer-book in king Edward VI.'s reign.

The name of Bede has been preserved, with the honour which he so worthily obtained in his own days, through many later generations. His chair, an old massive oaken seat, is still shewn at Jarrow. His bones were conveyed long afterwards to Durham, and a princely Norman bishop, Hugh Pudsey, nephew of King Stephen, enclosed them in a casket of gold and silver in that part of the cathedral called the Galilee, which was erected by him. A plain stone now lies over the place with the following inscription:—

Here rest the bones of Venerable Bede.

CHAPTER VIII.

EARLY ENGLISH MISSIONARIES. CONVERSION OF FRIESLAND AND SAXONY. WILBRORD, FIRST ARCHBISHOP OF UTRECHT. WINFRID, FIRST ARCHBISHOP OF MAYENCE.

> He, who holds the heaven in ward,
> Holy spirits had prepar'd,
> Who to rebels wild and stern
> Gave the lore of truth to learn.
>
> CÆDMON, § 50.

SOON after the gospel had been received by the Anglo-Saxons, the zeal of many devoted men among them was shewn in undertaking missions to the tribes of the same race, and who spoke a language like their own, on the continent of Europe. Wilfrid, bishop of York, before mentioned, was the first who attempted this, when on one of his voyages towards Rome he was driven by a storm to the coast of Friesland. It was the character of Wilfrid's life, that he did the best service to Christianity when he was farthest from home; "like the nightingales," says Thomas Fuller, "that sing the sweetest when farthest from their nests." Finding a hospitable welcome with the king of that country, he stayed through the winter preaching Christ to them, and with such success that multitudes came to him to ask at his hands the sacrament of baptism.

A few years later, Egbert, a Saxon hermit of great piety, was prepared to take a missionary voy-

age to Friesland; but being discouraged by a vision, he recommended the enterprise to another hermit, his friend Wicbert, who, after passing two years among the pagan people, finding none willing to hear or inquire after the truth, returned to his cell. At this time Pepin, duke of the Franks, great grandfather of Charlemagne, had just conquered Friesland, when a party of twelve English missionaries led by WILBRORD, a priest educated at the monastery of Ripon, presented themselves at his court. Pepin protected them; and as they were thus enabled to preach without annoyance from the enemies of their faith, they soon turned many from their idolatry. When Pepin himself had received baptism from the hands of Wilbrord, he took a journey, by that prince's advice, to Rome, to consult pope Sergius on the best way of continuing the work of his mission. By him he was consecrated bishop of the Frieslanders; and Charles Martel, the grandfather of Charlemagne, afterwards fixed his see at Utrecht. For forty-six years this zealous Englishman with his companions laboured unceasingly in the work of the gospel, and planted churches in most of the provinces bordering on the lower part of the course of the Rhine. As first bishop of this territory, Wilbrord also compiled a set of canons or laws for the government of his Church, and provided for its good instruction by founding schools and monasteries, and encouraging preachers both by precept and example. He seems never to have returned to England, but continued to hold intercourse by letters with his friends in the country, from which he had voluntarily become an exile for the sake of Christ, particularly with Acca, bishop of Hexham, who visited him on one occasion, as he took a voyage from Northumberland to Rome. His valuable writings have been lost; but his name was long honoured both in England and abroad.

He died at the advanced age of eighty-one, having now the title of archbishop of Utrecht, and leaving Christianity well established round him, about A.D. 741.

The example of this eminent man was soon followed by other English Saxons. Two priests, who had also "for the love of a heavenly kingdom" gone to live in banishment in Ireland, went out on a mission to Saxony, to try what success they might find with the inhabitants, who were originally of the same race with the majority of the people of England. These were both of one name, Hewald or Ewald, a name still remaining in Germany; but to distinguish them from each other, one was called, from the colour of his hair, the black Ewald, the other, the white or fair. They went among the pagan people without fear or thought of disguising their holy errand; and were heard and seen daily offering prayers, chanting psalms, and celebrating the Christian sacrifice on a small communion-table, which with holy vessels they carried on a sumpter-horse with them. Thus they sought out the earl or chief of the province, which was governed without a king; but the pagans, seeing that their aim was to bring in a new religion, and not being friendly to such a change, seized them before they could accomplish their mission, and put them to a cruel death, the white Ewald being shortly released by a sword-stroke, but his comrade mangled limb by limb and thrown into the Rhine. Their martyrdom took place near Cologne, where they were afterwards interred, their bodies being recovered by some of their companions, on the third of October, A.D. 695.

While Wilbrord was absent on one of his two journeys to Rome, the English missionaries in Friesland had sent one of their number, Swithbert, to be consecrated bishop by archbishop Theodore fo

a mission into Prussia; but on his arrival, finding Theodore dead, and his successor not yet appointed, he obtained consecration from Wilfrid, who was then residing at Leicester among the Mercians. Swithbert had good success in preaching among the Prussians; but they being shortly afterwards driven out of their province by the old Saxons, his flock was scattered, and the bishop retired to close his life in a small monastery, which Pepin gave him leave to build upon an island in the Rhine.

A still more eminent missionary followed the steps of these good men in the next generation. This was WINFRID, a native of Crediton in Devonshire, who, after passing his younger days at the monastery of Exeter, was advised by the abbot Winbert, who had the charge of his education, to enter into holy orders. He was ordained priest, and devoted himself diligently to preaching and the instruction of his countrymen; but in the midst of the esteem and success with which he laboured at home, he conceived a strong desire to become a partaker of the labours of the aged Wilbrord, whom he joined at Utrecht about the year A.D. 716. He then returned for a short time to England, but refused the offer of the abbacy of his own monastery, which was then vacant, and again set out for Hesse and Friesland, with recommendatory letters from Daniel, bishop of Winchester, A.D. 718. After enduring many great hardships and dangers with his English companions, Winfrid went to Rome, A.D. 723, and was consecrated by pope Gregory II. as missionary bishop of the Germans eastward of the Rhine. This pope gave him the Italian name of Boniface, as pope Sergius had before given to Wilbrord the name of Clement, and as we have seen the Italian missionaries in England give a new name to the Saxons whom they ordained as bishops.

Great numbers of missionaries now came to join him from England, and numbers of the people of the provinces of the upper Rhine were converted and baptised. After a long and honourable course of missionary labours, having received the dignity of archbishop of Mayence, he suffered martyrdom with several of his clergy in a tumult of the pagans near Dockum, in East Friesland, A.D. 755.[1]

From several letters of this remarkable man, which the respect of his disciples has preserved to us, we are able to form some notion of his Christian zeal, and the active character of his life. Among the earliest is one addressed in common to the bishops and clergy of the English Church, asking their united prayers for the success of his mission. It might almost serve as a form and model for a missionary prayer: "Knowing my own littleness," he says, "I am the more earnest to implore you with the tenderness of brotherly love to remember me in your prayers; that I may be delivered from the snares of the fowler, and from violent and wicked men; and 'that the word of God may have free course, and be glorified.' Pray, with a sense of pity for their need, for those Saxons who are yet pagans; that God and our Lord Jesus Christ, 'who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth,' may turn their hearts to the Catholic faith, that they may recover themselves from the wiles of the devil, by which they are held captive, and be numbered with the children of the Church, our holy mother. You would compassionate them, if you heard them say, as they often do to me, We are all of one blood and one bone: and remember, how soon man 'goeth the way of all the earth,' and that 'none in the grave confess unto the Lord, death can-

[1] An excellent account of his missionary life will be found in Mr. Palmer's Ecclesiastical History, chap. xiii. pp. 141-4.

not celebrate him.' Know that in this prayer of mine I have received the encouragement, consent, and blessing of two successive bishops of the Roman Church. Deal therefore so with my request, that your crowns of reward may grow bright and increase in the angels' court above; and as the communion of your love shall flourish and advance in Christ, may the Almighty Creator keep and preserve it evermore." Not less striking is another letter, written in his old age to his friend Daniel, asking for a copy of the six first books of the prophets, which his master, Winbert, had left him as a legacy at his death. It was written, as most English manuscripts of the Saxon period were, in a clear and legible character; and he could find none like it beyond sea. His eyes were now growing dim, and he could not well read small contracted letters; but, like other aged devout Christians, he took great delight in the prophetic books of holy Scripture. "If God shall inspire your heart to do me this kindness," he says, "you cannot send me a greater comfort for my age."

All the time that he was abroad he took a lively interest in the welfare of his native country and the good of the English Church, frequently writing to the Saxon princes and bishops, and giving and receiving advice on the affairs of Christianity in England and beyond sea. He did not spare to admonish the great and powerful, whose lives or conduct he thought a hindrance to the cause of truth. Thus, in a letter to Ethelbald, king of Mercia, after commending his charity to the poor, his defending the widow's cause, and the justice of his government, he sharply reproves him for the luxury and debauchery of his private life, and bids him to remember how such vices in king Roderick of Spain had lately brought down the vengeance of God upon the

Christian people of that country,[2] whose flourishing churches were now trodden under foot by the Saracens. The letter is written in a strain of earnest affection, reminding him how even the old pagan Saxons detested such crimes as he was charged with, often punishing adulterers and unchaste persons by burning or scourging; "how shameful then in one whom God has adopted for his son, and the Church our holy mother borne anew to a spiritual life in baptism!" Then pointing to the worldly deceits by which the young and prosperous are too easily beguiled, he repeats many texts of holy Scripture against the vanity of life, and ends with the solemn words, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul!"

To gain a favourable hearing for this letter Winfrid sent with it another to announce a present of some falcons, used in the old English sport of hawking, of a breed not easily procured in England; and he desires Herefrid, the king's chaplain, to take a convenient time to read the letter of reproof to Ethelbald, translating it from Latin into his native tongue. The king, who knew the worth of his character, took his admonition patiently, and at length reformed his dissolute life.

Ethelbert II., king of Kent, was another of Winfrid's correspondents, who sent him friendly gifts, and helped him in the expenses of his foreign mission. This worthy prince seems to have been fond of the same field-sport of hawking, common to most old English gentlemen; for he desires Winfrid to send him some German hawks, which he heard were better trained, or more powerful than those which he

[2] The wrong done by king Roderick to the daughter of count Julian led that nobleman to invite the Moors or Saracens into Spain, where they had gained possession of the best part of the country a few years before Winfrid wrote, A.D. 711.

had in Kent, to bring down herons to the ground. But the occasion of a letter, which is still preserved, was his hearing from a religious lady at Rome that Winfrid prayed for him. "It is a great comfort to me," he says, "to know this; and it would add much to my satisfaction to receive a letter or a messenger from you." He sends him as a remembrance a small silver cup inlaid with gold. "The days," he says, "are evil; therefore pray for me as long as you hear that I am in this mortal flesh; and after my death, if you survive me, remember me still in your prayers."

Among the bishops with whom Winfrid kept up a friendly intercourse by letters, was Cuthbert, archbishop of Canterbury, to whom he sent, A.D. 745, some canons of a synod lately held at Augsburg, giving more authority to the bishop of Rome over the Churches in that part of the country than was allowed him in the English Church. Cuthbert, who was a wise and prudent prelate, did not imitate his example in binding himself to obey in all things the orders of St. Peter, as they called the pope's commands; but at a synod held at Cliff's-hoe, near Rochester, A.D. 747, he and the other English bishops engaged to maintain their own laws against encroachment, keeping up a free correspondence with foreign churches and a union of affection, but not flattering any person because he held a station of higher dignity in the Church. In other respects, the advice of the missionary archbishop to his brother in Kent was excellent, shewing the deepest sense of the responsibilities of such a station, on which is laid the care of all the churches. "Remember," he says, "the word of God to those shepherds who feed themselves and not the flock: (Ezek. xxxiv.) I WILL REQUIRE MY FLOCK AT THEIR HANDS. Trust, then, to the protection of the Almighty; be bold in the cause of truth; be prepared to suffer

reproach, or even violence. Let us not be dumb dogs—watchmen that give no warning; nor so careful of ourselves as to retreat from danger when the wolf comes to devour. Let us stand upon our watch, and preach to high and low, rich and poor, and do our utmost to bring all within that law of life which makes the obedient happy." Again he says, "The post of honour which we fill is of more danger than a lower station: it cannot be held without its trials. The helmsman must not leave his place when the seas are smooth; but to fail to steer the ship in a storm is unpardonable cowardice. Such is the office of a prelate in times of persecution: dangerous to hold, but ruinous to betray." He speaks of Clement and Cornelius, bishops of Rome, of St. Cyprian and St. Athanasius, who all underwent trials of this kind, but guarded well the flock of Christ, choosing rather to suffer loss of goods and loss of life than fail in any part of their high trust. By such examples and encouragement did this devoted Christian cheer his friend, and prepare his own soul against the dreadful death which for him had no terrors.

Though he had bound himself and the Christians under him to such a strict subjection to the see of Rome, this did not lead him blindly to follow opinions and practices, which, though in favour with the Romans, appeared to him unfounded on any Scriptural warrant. Thus he wrote to Nothelm, archbishop of Canterbury, to ask him whether it was forbidden by the old Catholic fathers for a man to marry the widowed mother of a child to whom he had stood godfather. The Romans at this time had begun to multiply prohibitions of marriage among kindred, which was afterwards a fruitful source of encroachments on the part of the pope; and this was one of their prohibitions. The good sense of Winfrid was revolted at it: "I cannot un-

derstand," he said, "why a man, who has entered once into this kind of spiritual relation with a parent, commits a deadly sin if afterwards he is joined together with her in lawful matrimony. By this rule prohibitions might extend to every member of the Church; for Christians are all sons and daughters of Christ and his Church, and so made in holy baptism brothers and sisters to each other." Again, he complained very freely to pope Zachary of some heathenish customs and abuses which he heard of at Rome. "These rude Germans, Bavarians, and Franks," he says, "if they see any thing done at Rome which we forbid them to do, think that your priests permit it, and hold our admonitions in contempt. They say that every year, on the first of January, they have seen at Rome, both by night and day, near the churches and in the public places, such dances as the pagans use, the same profane shouting and heathenish songs; and during this day and night there is no one who will lend out of his house to his neighbour either fire or steel, or any household utensil.[3] They say also that there are women, whom they have seen with charms and bands bound about their arms and legs, like pagan witches, who carry on a trade of spells with any customers they may find. All these things, seen by carnal and ignorant men, are a great hindrance to our preaching and the progress of the faith. If you, my good father, will forbid these pagan customs at Rome, you will do a good service, and assure us of great advancement in the doctrine of the Church."

Winfrid had the greatest affection for Bede, often sending requests to the bishops and clergy in Northumberland for his writings, calling him "the candle of the Lord, sent for the spiritual enlightenment of

[3] A remnant of this pagan custom still prevails about Christmas in the north of England.

the Church." He corresponded also with many religious persons in more private life, particularly a Saxon lady called Buga, the head of a religious family in Kent, to whom he sent many letters of beautiful Christian consolation. His most intimate friends in the English Church were the bishops of his native province of Wessex, Forthere bishop of Sherborne, the successor of Aldhelm, and Daniel bishop of Winchester. Daniel, as was before mentioned, sent him out as a missionary, with a letter to recommend all the Christians in the mission to receive him in the name of Christ, and continued afterwards to write to him to encourage him in his excellent labours. "I rejoice," he says, "and thank God for the strength of faith which has enabled you to do such good works among rude heathens, turning the wilderness into a fruitful field by the plough of gospel preaching." Then he gives him some very judicious advice how to converse with the pagan people, to gain their attention and put them upon inquiry. "Ask them," he says, "such questions as these: Had your gods and goddesses a beginning? had the world a beginning? what is the good for which you worship these gods? is it for the present enjoyments of this life, or for that happiness which you expect to come in another world? which is most worthy of your thanks and praise? Then sometimes shew them the superiority of the Christian faith: Are your gods almighty? why then do they suffer Christians to come and pervert their worshippers? why are those good countries now possessed by Christians, which were lately held by pagans? Only the cold and barren countries of the north are left to you. But it is the power of truth which has given this increase." The good bishop, when he wrote this letter, was confined to his house by a fit of sickness, and he entreats his friend's

prayers for him; but he speaks of such sufferings with the confidence of a Christian in the faithfulness of God, and repeats the text, "In the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, thy comforts have given peace to my soul."

Such was the kind of religious correspondence kept up by our Christian forefathers, and with such zeal did they labour in the Lord's cause. To them is owing almost all the light of truth and civilisation which was spread through the Netherlands and the north of Germany. Wilbrord and Winfrid, and their companions, were the founders of churches which have ever since remained in those countries; and while the Mahometans were making their first great inroads on the Christian nations in the East, and overran Africa and Spain, they thus provided a means to counterpoise the loss, by converting a large portion of the nations which came to people and subdue Europe. Wilbrord baptised Pepin d'Heristal, the father of Charles Martel, whose great victory over the Saracens at Tours in France, A.D. 732, effectually checked the Mahometan power in Europe, and drove them back into Spain; and Winfrid baptised Pepin, the son of Charles Martel and father of Charlemagne, whose valour and prudence most of all laid the foundation of social order and fixed government in the unsettled warlike tribes over whom he ruled. How much Charlemagne himself owed of his fame and greatness to one of our Christian countrymen will be seen from the following chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

PROGRESS OF ARTS AND LEARNING AMONG THE ENGLISH SAXONS. SCHOOL OF YORK. ARCHBISHOPS EGBERT AND ALBERT. ALCUIN AND CHARLEMAGNE.

Still in my mind
Is fix'd, and now beats full upon my heart,
Thy mild paternal image, as on earth,
Precept on precept, line on line, it taught
The way for man to win eternity.

DANTE.

THE light of learning and Christian knowledge, which shone so brightly in the north of England during the lifetime of Bede, was not put out with his death. Besides the monastery of Jarrow, where his pupils still promoted the truths they had learned from him, Lindisfarne and Hexham were schools of Christianity and nurseries of the Church. St. Alkmund, bishop of Hexham, was a man long remembered for his piety and charity after his death, A.D. 781. Eadfrid, bishop of Lindisfarne, a contemporary of Bede's, was the author of a translation of the Gospels into Saxon, which is said to be still preserved in the British Museum. He was followed by other teachers, whose names are recorded in old history; particularly Iglac, an eminent expounder of Scripture, and Ethelwolf, whose historical work on the church of Lindisfarne still remains to us.

But the most eminent school of Christianity in the north in the eighth century was at York, under

the two eminent archbishops EGBERT and ALBERT, on whom it may be said with truth that some portion of the spirit of Bede rested. We have already seen how Bede, a short time before his death, addressed a letter to archbishop Egbert, giving him his last thoughts on the state of the English Church. He delivered his mind to him with the greatest freedom, as to one of whose sentiments he was well assured. This prince and prelate, for he was a brother of the king of Northumbria, after obtaining from Rome a renewal of the pall which was held by Paulinus, set himself in earnest about the good government of the Church in his province. They were happy times for Northumbria, says Alcuin, when the king and the bishop ruled each their province with perfect concord in the administration of the laws, the one as brave as the other was good; one distinguished for active enterprise, the other for deeds of mercy. The king, Edbert, however, at length retired from busy life, and gave his kingdom to another, dying in his brother's monastery, about a year after Egbert's death, A.D. 768. The archbishop, after ably ruling the Church for more than thirty years, and composing a book of rules for priests to observe with penitents, and also a collection of Church-laws or canons in the English language, was succeeded by a near relation, Albert, a man well qualified to pursue the improvements he had begun, and still further to promote religious and useful learning.

Albert, says Alcuin, was a pattern of goodness, justice, piety, and liberality; a teacher who taught the catholic faith with a spirit of love; an excellent ruler of the Church in which he was brought up: when he spoke of the law, it was as the call of the trumpet to awake to judgment: but he was still the herald of salvation: stern to the stouthearted who refused to bend, but kind and gentle to the good;

the hope of the poor, the solace of the distressed, the father of orphans; and the more humble, the more he was exalted. While Egbert lived, he was the principal teacher of the college at York, where the Saxon youth born between the Tees and Humber were instructed: it was a college for education, adjoining the religious house, where the monks and unmarried priests resided, who were more immediately under the orders of the archbishop. Here Albert shewed the excellence of his talents, and the extent of his acquirements, by leading his pupils through such branches of learning and science as would not be easily exceeded at any modern university; for he taught himself, or by the help of other teachers, the art of grammar, rhetoric or eloquence, jurisprudence or the science of law, poetry, particularly Latin metres, astronomy and natural history, mathematics and chronology, and, above all, the exposition of holy Scripture. It is not to be supposed that he imposed this course of reading and study on all his pupils, but according to their abilities and inclination chose out different branches of instruction for them. If he marked any young men who shewed signs of talent and good disposition, like a good master he made them his friends by an affectionate regard to their improvement; and thus he had many who, out of kindness to their instructor, after they had gone through some of the arts and sciences, sought his guidance to help them to understand their Bible.

His love of acquiring knowledge led him to take more than one journey to the continent of Europe, to find out any new books or new plans of instruction in other countries. He also visited Rome, rather from feelings of devotion, than to increase his learned stores. He was received on his return to England with great honour; and some of the Saxon kings in

the south would gladly have kept him at their courts; but wishing to profit his native province, he resumed his post of instructor at York. The people are said to have made it their petition to the king of Northumbria, on the death of Egbert, that he might be his successor.

As he had borne his part with such excellent diligence before, his care did not relax in this higher station. He fed his flock with the food of the divine word, says Alcuin; guarded the lambs of Christ from the wolf, and bore back on his shoulders the sheep that had wandered in the wild. He spoke the truth to all, not sparing kings or earls, if they misbehaved. Nor did he suffer the weight of his high charge to prevent his studying the holy Scriptures as much as ever. His table was not changed, nor his dress more splendid than before; but while he avoided all delicacy, he took care to shun the other extreme of meanness.

About two years and two months before his death, when he had filled the office of archbishop for thirteen years, he retired into the monastery, that he might have leisure to serve God alone. He was now full of days and honour; and calling to him his two favourite pupils, Eanbald and Alcuin, he gave up to the first the bishop's office, to which he had been appointed, and to the other, what he valued as much, his chair of instruction and his books. These were placed in a library, which he had built for their reception; and a list of them is given by Alcuin, long enough to shew the character of the books which were studied in the early English Church. It is likely that at Lindisfarne, and Jarrow, and Hexham, and perhaps also at Whitby, there were libraries of nearly equal value. There can be no doubt that there was one as large at Canterbury; and probably at Rochester, at Winchester, and at

Malmsbury, and Oxford, there were good stores of books before the Danish invasions. Alcuin does not give the names of all the volumes, but of those which he thought most valuable. First, what was of most esteem in the eyes of an old English bishop, next to the inspired writings, and what, it is to be hoped, will always be in high esteem with the ministers of the English Church, the library contained many of the works of the primitive fathers; St. Basil, St. Athanasius, St. Chrysostom, St. Hilary, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, popes Leo and Gregory, Fulgentius, and Lactantius, Boethius, Prosper, and some of later date. There were also a few of the Roman historians, orators, and poets; the Greek philosopher Aristotle;[1] a number of writers on grammar; and the works of Alcuin of Canterbury, Aldhelm, Bede, and Wilbrord, proving that the collector of these treasures had a just value for the writings of his own countrymen.

It is necessary to mention, as shewing the progress of art and improvement, the two churches which were now erected in York, and the ornaments given to them by archbishop Albert. The old church of king Edwin, repaired by Wilfrid, was now adorned with a great altar, or shrine, over the place where that king had been baptised. This shrine was adorned itself with gold, silver, and precious stones, and was dedicated to the honour of St. Paul, the teacher of the Gentiles. Over it was hung by a chain from the roof a large chandelier, with nine rows of lights, three in each row, to light it up by night. A large cross was raised at the back of this

[1] It has been often said that the learned men of modern Europe knew nothing of this Greek philosopher till they heard of him through the Arabians, by means of the crusades. It is plain that Alcuin had studied his writings; and what is so likely as that Theodore brought them into England?

altar, of equally precious workmanship. Another altar, in honour of the martyrs or All Saints,[2] was also set up and adorned with not much less of cost. These, with a flagon, or sacramental wine-cup, of pure gold, were his gifts to the old minster. But he found the increase of population and worshippers in York required a new church to be built; and of this his pupils, Eanbald and Alcuin, were the architects. It was several years in building, and was a very handsome structure; lofty, with an arched roof supported on strong columns, and several porches, which, with their different projections, made a pleasing variety of light and shade as the sun shone upon them. This church, with its thirty little shrines, was finished only ten days before its pious founder breathed his last. He came out of his monastery to assist his successor in the dedication of it; and shortly after a crowd of clergy and people, old and young, followed his honoured bier to the grave, A.D. 782.

We must now give an account of that famous man, who next to Bede was the most eminent teacher of the early English Church, and who, under the patronage of the emperor Charlemagne, became the great restorer of learning on the continent of Europe. This was ALCUIN of York, a man of the most active spirit and enlarged mind, and only second in his well-earned reputation to Charlemagne himself.

Alcuin appears to have been born at York about the year of Bede's death, A.D. 735: he was educated, as we have seen, at the school founded by archbishop Egbert, under the able instruction of Albert; and when he succeeded to the charge of the see, Alcuin was appointed to preside over this school. At this time the state of learning in Great Britain and Ireland

[2] Many of the Saxon churches were dedicated to All Saints. Indeed it is probable that wherever there is a church so dedicated, it is of Saxon foundation.

was far superior to that of any other part of Europe. There had been no teacher of any eminence in Italy since the time of pope Gregory the Great ; and though his successors were commonly men of some learning, their influence had little effect in advancing the state of knowledge in Italy or in France. King Ina of Wessex, among other works of piety and public benefit, had founded an English school at Rome, where it seems likely that many of the missionaries who aided Wilbrord and Winfrid received a portion of their education. But though some of the English churchmen studied for a longer or shorter time there, the most eminent were those who were entirely trained at Canterbury or York, and other schools in their native land. And the state of England was at this time much more favourable to learning and civilisation than that of France, or Italy, or Spain. Though there were often short wars between the different kings of the north, the midland, and the west, yet the boundaries continued much the same. From the time of Theodore's arrival to the great invasion of the Danes, A.D. 668-832, there was a period of more than one hundred and sixty years, during which the country was for the most part in a settled state. But in Italy and France all this time the kingdoms were constantly changing; the Lombards and Greeks fought many bloody battles in Italy, and the Visigoths, Franks, and Burgundians, were bringing trouble and disorder into France. And Spain and part of France were thrown into still greater confusion by the Saracens. It was not till the victories of Pepin and his distinguished son and successor Charlemagne, that these countries were free from the inroads of new invaders.

It was after the death of Albert, when Alcuin, according to the custom of the English Church at

that period, was sent to Rome to obtain a renewal of the honour of the pall for his successor Eanbald. His fame was by this time spread far among places of learning on the continent: when on his return, at Parma in the north of Italy, he met with Charlemagne, who sought him out to invite him to establish himself in France. The offer was a tempting one; but Alcuin did not accept it till he had obtained the consent of the king and archbishop of his native province. He then went to present himself at the emperor's court; and Charlemagne, who knew his value, immediately gave him the preferment of three abbeys, made him the instructor of his children, and his own confidential counsellor and friend, A.D. 783.

From this time for several years we may regard Alcuin as the minister of public instruction over the greater part of Christendom; for the empire of Charlemagne extended from the river Ebro in Spain to the eastern frontiers of Germany, and southward it included all the Italian provinces as far as to Rome. In this capacity his care divided itself into a number of useful labours, which the authority of his patron enabled him to pursue with great advantage to the cause of religion and learning. First, his attention was given to the restoration of correct copies of the holy Scriptures, and books of prayer and other holy offices used in churches; for, during the many years of war and disorder in France, these had not only become very scarce, but such copies as there were had often been taken by persons whose knowledge was by no means equal to the task. When these had been well examined, a number of scribes were employed in writing out correct copies, and one was sent to each of the principal abbeys or cathedral churches, where the more learned and zealous of the bishops and abbots had the number still further increased. The art of copying manu-

scripts thus became a means of reputation and profit to the ingenious; and the Roman letters, in which all books are now printed, became from this time, instead of the Saxon or other characters, the common form of writing adopted by all scholars. Next to the holy Scriptures, he employed himself in making extracts, as Bede had done, from the Christian fathers, the best interpreters of the Scriptures. These were sometimes put into the form of sermons, or were themselves the sermons or homilies written by the fathers on different portions of Scripture; and were recommended to be read on festivals or the Sundays throughout the year; on the same principle as the English Church, at the time of the Reformation, adopted in putting out the Books of Homilies. But, knowing that human learning, properly employed, is the faithful handmaid of divine learning, he did not neglect to promote the procuring and copying of manuscripts of such classical authors, grammarians, orators, and poets, as he had himself studied and taught at York. "I want," he said to Charlemagne, "such books as will serve to educate a good scholar, such as I had in my native country through the industry and devoted zeal of my good master archbishop Egbert; let your excellency give me permission, and I will send over some of my pupils here, who shall copy out and bring over into France the flowers of the libraries in Britain; that there may be not only an enclosed garden at York, but plants of paradise at Tours also. In the morning of my life, I sowed the seeds of learning in my native land; now, in the evening, though my blood is not so quick as it was, I spare not to do my best to sow the same seeds in France; and I trust that, with God's grace, they will prosper well in both countries."

That this good man, however, did not run any

risk of forgetting the study of that volume which is above all human learning, may be judged from the letter he wrote to Charlemagne from the abbey of Tours, A.D. 801, with a copy of the whole Bible carefully corrected by himself throughout.

"I have for a long time been studying," he says, "what present I could offer you, not unworthy of the glory of your imperial power, and one which might add something to the richness of your royal treasures. I was unwilling, that while others brought you all kinds of rich gifts, my poor wit should remain dull and idle, and that the messenger even of so humble a person as myself should appear before you with empty hands. I have at last found out, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a present which it befits my character to offer, and which it will not be unworthy of your wisdom to receive. Nothing can I offer more worthy of your great name than the book which I now send, the divine Scriptures, all bound up in one volume, carefully corrected by my own hand. It is the best gift which the devotion of my heart to your service, and my zeal for the increase of your glory, has enabled me to find."

When Alcuin wrote this letter, he was residing, in the retirement of his age, at his monastery of Tours, to which Charlemagne had unwillingly permitted him to withdraw from the court a few years earlier. His patron, too, was then past the meridian of life, and he appears to have been struck with admiration of such holy diligence; for it is recorded of him, that the year before he died, he employed much of his leisure, with the help of some Greek and Syrian Christians, in correcting a copy of the four Gospels in Greek.

There were in those days many persons who read books, but had not much skill in writing. Such pro-

bably was Wihtred, king of Kent, one of the earliest English lawgivers, before mentioned, who yet at the end of one of his charters says that he puts the sign of the cross, not knowing how to form a letter. Such also was Charlemagne, who not having learned to write when he was young, at an advanced age attempted to teach himself, and is said to have carried about his tablets and writing materials, and to have laid them under his pillow when he slept, that he might practise at any leisure moment in private. But he never made good progress in the art. Hence it was the more usual practice for almost all but the clergy and monks to employ a secretary or clerk to write for them; and it became a separate profession. It is said of Charlemagne, that having once a skilful scribe with him, who was accused of holding a correspondence with the enemy, he was about to order him to lose his right hand, but he checked himself with the words, "If I cut off his hand, where shall I find so good a writer?" We must not, however, suppose, that all who could not write were also unable to read; for it is certain that Charlemagne was well acquainted with Greek and Latin authors, and his skill in speaking was so great, that he might have been a master in the art of eloquence. He was therefore well able to see the great want of learning and of schools in the empire, and was anxious to remedy it. He had received addresses from the heads of monasteries, full of good and pious sentiments, and assuring him that the writers remembered him in their prayers; but the words were often misapplied, and the spelling false. How should such men be fit to explain the Scriptures, in which there are many things hard to understand, figures of speech, and sentences requiring spiritual explanation? He saw, therefore, that it was necessary to provide teachers. With Alcuin's advice, he founded schools

in all the cities where a bishop resided, and at all the great monasteries; and to these he invited the most learned men that were to be found in other countries. And the greater part of these places of education were filled with teachers who were pupils of Alcuin.

As long as Alcuin resided at the court, he was himself the head master of what was called the School of the Palace. Here his pupils were Charles, Pepin, and Louis, the three sons of Charlemagne, with other young noblemen; and the interest which was thrown into his instructions by the skill of the teacher attracted several of the older persons of the court, princes, councillors, and bishops, and sometimes the ladies also, to listen to his lectures. He encouraged the pupils to ask questions, and made it a part of his plan to give such striking short answers as would impress the memory. Thus we have a dialogue between Pepin and Alcuin:

"*Pepin.* What is speech?

Alcuin. The interpreter of the soul.

Pep. What gives birth to the speech?

Alc. The tongue.

Pep. How does the tongue give birth to the speech?

Alc. By striking the air.

Pep. What is the air?

Alc. The preserver of life.

Pep. What is life?

Alc. An enjoyment for the happy, a grief for the wretched, a waiting-time for death.

Pep. What is death?

Alc. An inevitable event, an uncertain voyage, a subject of tears for the living, the time that confirms wills, the thief that makes its prey of man.

Pep. What is sleep?

Alc. The image of death.

Pep. What is liberty for

Alc. Innocence.

Pep. What is that waking sleep, of which I have heard you speak?

Alc. Hope, a waking dream, cheering our toil, though it lead to nothing.

Pep. What is friendship?

Alc. The likeness of souls.

Pep. What is faith?

Alc. The certainty of marvellous things and things unknown."

Sometimes he would try the wits of his young pupil with riddles or puzzling questions in turn.

"*Alc.* I have seen a dead man walking,—one that never was alive.

Pep. How can that be? explain.

Alc. It was my own reflection in the water.

Pep. Why could not I guess it, having myself so often seen the like?

Alc. Well, you have a good wit; I will tell you some more extraordinary things. One whom I never knew talked with me, without tongue or voice; he had no life before, nor will he live hereafter; and I neither knew him, nor understood what he said.

Pep. Master, you must have been troubled with a dream.

Alc. Right, my child: hear another. I have seen the dead beget the living, and the dead have been then consumed by the breath of the living.

Pep. You speak of a fire kindled by rubbing dry sticks together, and consuming the sticks afterwards."

Such ways of exercising the first efforts of an inquiring mind are not quite out of date with gentle teachers in our time. The kind-hearted ingenuity of Alcuin displayed in them may not be unworthy of the imitation of a more refined age. But this was only the lighter play of a mind which was full

of noble designs, and watchful to extend the reign of truth and mercy in the world.

In A.D. 796, Charlemagne having gained some victories over the Huns, Alcuin wrote to congratulate him on his success, and to advise him how to proceed with the conversion of these people. "Send to them gentle missionaries," he said, "and do not immediately require them to pay for their support; it were better to lose the tithes than to lose the means of extending the faith." For the order used in their instruction he recommended the plan laid down by St. Augustine in one of his treatises:— "First, teach them the immortality of the soul, the certainty of a life to come, the eternal reward of the righteous, and the judgment of the wicked, and what deeds they are by which man shapes his course to heaven or to hell. Then let them with great care be taught the faith in the holy Trinity, and the coming of the Son of God into the world for the salvation of mankind." He wrote to this great monarch more than once, to pray him in the midst of his conquests to be merciful to his prisoners, and to spare the vanquished; and did not lose the occasion, when the death of the empress had opened a way to milder thoughts, to address him in words of spiritual consolation.

When Charlemagne went on his famous visit to Rome, A.D. 800, on which occasion pope Leo III. placed on his head the imperial crown, he was very anxious to take Alcuin with him. "For shame," said he, "that you should like better to stay under the smoky roofs of Tours, than to be entertained in the gilded palaces of Rome." But Alcuin was now sensible of the infirmities of advancing age, and begged that he might be permitted to end his pilgrimage in his retirement. The great abbeys which he had held, with their large estates, had given him

a princely income; and he had on the lands which belonged to them as many as twenty thousand tenants or labourers. But he now, with Charlemagne's consent, divided these monasteries among his principal pupils; and though he continued to write to his patron, as when he sent him his corrected Bible, he was now engaged till his death, May 19, A.D. 804, in little else but the care of his soul.

He appears from his writings to have had a great delight in that part of God's service which consists in praise. "As often as we are so employed," he says, "we imitate on earth the life of angels. When the Psalmist has said, *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house,* that we may know in what that blessedness consists, he adds the words describing their employment, *They will be for ever praising Thee.*"

He was zealous to promote preaching, writing to Charlemagne to complain of some priests who neglected it, and said it was the bishop's duty and not theirs. Writing to the English bishops, Uhard and Tilfrid, of Elmham and Dunwich, he says: "You have authority to speak as holding the keys of heaven, power to open to the penitent, to shut against those who withstand the truth. Live therefore so that you may acquit yourselves of so excellent a trust; and remember that it is the praise of bishops to be constant in preaching."

He did not however forget the end of preaching, saying of compunction, or the devout affection of the heart: "It is a treasure in the heart better than a hoard of gold. Three things make up this sweet compunction: remembrance of sins past, consideration of our fleeting pilgrimage through this life of misery, and desire of our heavenly country. And when through prayer it finds utterance, sorrow flies away, and the Holy Ghost keeps watch in the heart."

Charlemagne and others of his court seem some-

times to have asked him questions on Scripture difficulties. Some questions of this kind may be found among his writings. "It is said, No man hath seen God at any time; and the apostle calls him the King immortal and invisible. Yet our Lord says, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. *Answ.* God may be seen according to the gift of his grace; that is, He may be understood in this either by angels, or by the souls of the saints. But the full nature of his godhead neither any angel nor saint can perfectly understand; therefore he is called invisible."

There was one Felix, bishop of Urgel in Spain, who wrote at this time against the godhead of our blessed Saviour, calling him only the adopted Son of God. Against him Alcuin wrote more than one treatise; and it is to be hoped that he sincerely retracted his error, for which a council of the Church degraded him from his bishopric. At least the controversy had a remarkable end; for Felix after his deposition lived on terms of friendship with Alcuin, and passed much of his time with him at his monastery of Tours.

A more remarkable dispute arose in Alcuin's time about the worship of images in churches. In A.D. 792, Charlemagne sent over into England a book which had been forwarded to him for that purpose from the East, containing the decrees of a council of the Greek Church in favour of the religious adoration of images. It seems that Alcuin was at this time on a visit to England; and the bishops of the English Church being of one mind in condemning this new doctrine, — a doctrine which, they declared, "the Church of God holds accursed," — engaged him to write to Charlemagne against it. He did so; and writing in the name and with the authority of the English Church, and using the soundest

scriptural arguments, notwithstanding that Adrian, the pope of that time, had approved of the idolatrous practice, he effectually engaged Charlemagne to use his influence to check it. In A.D. 794, that monarch called together a council at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, in which three hundred bishops solemnly condemned the doctrine of the Greek council and the pope; and this step prevented for a long time afterwards the progress of the error in Great Britain.

Such were some of the services of this remarkable man, both to his own country and that which had adopted him, and to the Church of Christ. His writings were highly valued in England, and often made a portion of instruction from the pulpit; and to France he was a benefactor, whose good works left a blessing behind them more durable than the victories of Charlemagne.

Boroughs as STAMFORD 2
Markets or Places of Toll as Spalding 8
Sites of Saxon Monasteries as Crowland +
Villages with Churches ..... Witham +

CHAPTER X.

SHORT VIEW OF THE STATE OF THE CHURCH AT THE CLOSE OF THE SEVEN KINGDOMS. REIGN OF EGBERT, ETHELWOLF, AND HIS SONS. INROADS OF THE DANES. DESTRUCTION OF THE CHURCHES IN THE NORTH.

To shake the Saxon's mild domain,
Rush'd in rude swarms the robber Dane,
From frozen wastes and caverns wild
To genial England's scenes beguil'd:
And in his clamorous van exulting came
The demons foul of famine and of flame:
Witness the sheep-clad summits, roughly crown'd
With many a frowning foss and airy mound,
Which yet his desultory march proclaim.

T. WARTON.

WE must now return to the state of the Church in England, whose teachers and chief bishops, both in the north and south, were often in correspondence with their distinguished countrymen in France. During the period from the death of Ina of Wessex to the rise of Egbert, the Mercian kingdom had taken the lead among the Saxon states. All the kingdoms south of the Humber, when Bede wrote his history, had acknowledged the supremacy of Ethelbald, who reigned for a term of forty years, A.D. 716-756. Shortly after his death arose another powerful king, Offa, whose reign extended over forty years more, to A.D. 796. Offa,

not content with the submission of the neighbouring kings, sought by force or treachery to put an end to their sovereignties. He is charged with the murder of a prince of East Anglia, whom he had invited in friendship to his court; and he made war upon the little kingdom of Kent, which stubbornly maintained its independence.

In this dispute the Churches of Canterbury and Rochester, and other seats of religion in Kent, were exposed to suffering. Offa thought it concerned the honour of his crown to diminish the honour of the see of Canterbury, and persuaded pope Adrian, the same who wrote in defence of image-worship, to send an archbishop's pall to Higbert, bishop of Lichfield, making the six other bishoprics between the Thames and Humber subject to him instead of archbishop Eanbert. It is no great credit to pope Adrian, that he consented so easily to this project, for which there was no reason but the worldly ambition of Offa; and his honesty is somewhat impeached by it, inasmuch as Offa began a practice, which was long afterwards continued, of sending a yearly present in money, called "Peter-pence," to Rome. The Saxon laws speak of this present as "the king's alms;" it was not a tax paid to the pope, but to the king's officers: it led, however, afterwards to help the encroachments of the bishops of Rome.[1]

The popes about this time were men of very different character from the good pope Gregory, who had given so freely of his own without expecting any return. The Romans, indeed, say that this Adrian I. did not degenerate from his predecessors, and that he is fit to be compared with the best of them. But

[1] Peter-pence were paid on St. Peter's-day for alms to the poor at Rome, and for lighting up the church in honour of St. Peter. The sum was 365 marks, mark for every day in the year, or about 120*l*.; no very great sum even in those days.

archbishop Eanbert and the English bishops, who had opposed him on the question of image-worship, were probably of a different opinion; and this opinion might have been fostered when he was so easily persuaded to disturb Gregory's arrangement for the two archbishoprics,—an arrangement which experience had shewn then, as it has ever since, to be good and convenient. A council of the English Church, held at Cliff's-hoe a few years afterwards, A.D. 803, censured this act of Offa, as an act of the greatest fraud, and Adrian's consent to it, as "obtained by surreptitious means and deceitful arguments;" a plain proof that, if they thought he might have been unbribed, they did not count him infallible.

At this period also the popes had begun to require a very inconvenient custom, which they afterwards renewed with more success, that the archbishops of England should go to Rome in person for their palls. Against this Alcuin protested, and wrote a letter to king Offa to prevent it: "The right order is," he said, "that when York is vacant, the archbishop of Canterbury shall consecrate to that see; when Canterbury is vacant, the archbishop of York shall consecrate; and the pope ought to send the pall." The English bishops took occasion, in a letter to pope Leo III., to protest likewise against this custom. They reminded him that Gregory had never required it, nor his successors; but that Honorius particularly had laid down the rule as "the great scholar Alcuin" had stated it in his letter; that the new custom had begun through the disputes of their kings, meaning, as it would seem, the dispute between Offa and the princes of Kent. They also hint rather plainly, that they suspect the love of money to be at the bottom of the business. "In the beginning of our Church," they say, "the holy and apostolic men of Rome fulfilled the excellent precept

of our Saviour,—*Freely ye have received; freely give.* The heresy of Simon Magus had then no strength or power; for the gift of God was not then purchased by money, but freely given. Let those who sell the grace of God fear what Peter said to Simon, *Thy money perish with thee.*" With these strong words the letter concludes. It appears to have been successful, as, for some time afterwards, the archbishops received their palls without going to Rome.

Offa is commended by Alcuin, after his death, as a prince of engaging manners, and studious to promote good Christian morals among his people. At the same time, he does not disguise that these better qualities were tarnished by deeds of avarice and cruelty; and he mentions it as a probable mark of divine vengeance, that his only son Egfrid, whom he had made the sharer of his throne, died a few days after his father in the flower of his age. Among the oppressive acts of Offa towards the Church, he seems to have usurped the property of bishops and abbots in the monasteries; not suppressing the religious houses, but giving them as preferments to his friends, particularly one at March in Cambridgeshire, and the abbey of Bath, which he made bishop Heathored of Worcester surrender to him. To establish his power the more, he enriched the abbeys of Bredon and Evesham, founded by his grandfather, with lands taken from the same bishopric or its dependent monasteries. But at a late period of his life he was led, by some remorse of conscience, to found the famous abbey of St. Alban's, which he endowed with large estates in Hertfordshire, and which became one of the most splendid of the old Benedictine houses in early Norman times.

King Alric of Kent, the antagonist of Offa, and the last of the royal line of Ethelbert, in the same year followed his rival to the grave. After his death

the little realm was distracted by new competitors of uncertain title; and the archbishop Ethelhard, by the advice of his clergy, left Canterbury, to find a home in another province. In his distress he wrote to Alcuin for his friendly counsel; from whom he received a very candid reproof, conveyed, however, with all the delicacy of true Christian feeling. "What can so humble a person as myself say but acquiesce in the advice of so many of Christ's priests? Yet if they have authority to persuade you that the shepherd ought to fly when the wolf comes, in what value do you hold the gospel, which calls him a hireling, and not the shepherd, who is afraid of the fury of the wolf?" He begs him earnestly to reconsider the motives of his flight; and however he may justify it by the text, *If they persecute you in one city, flee into another*, to remember also, that *the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep*. He advises that, on his restoration, the council of the realm should institute a public fast, as an act of public penitence, on the part of the primate for his flight, and on the part of the people for having occasioned it. "Return," he says, "and bring back to the house of God the youths who were studying there, the choir of singers, and the penmen with their books; that the Church may regain its comely order, and future primates may be trained up under her care. And for yourself, let your preaching be constant in all places; whether in presence of the bishops in full synod, whom it is your duty to admonish to be regular in holding ordinations, earnest in preaching, careful of their churches, strict in enforcing the holy rite of baptism, and bountiful in alms; or whether it be for the good of the souls of the poor in different churches and parishes, especially among the people of Kent, over whom God has been pleased to appoint you to preside. Above all, let it be your

strictest care to restore the reading of the holy Scriptures, that the Church may be exalted with honour, and that the holy see, which was first in the faith, may be first in all wisdom and holiness; where the inquirer after truth may find an answer, the ignorant learn what he desires to know, and the understanding Christian see what may deserve his praise."

May this good prayer for the archbishop and the church of Canterbury, offered by a Christian patriot more than a thousand years ago, find an answering chord in every English Christian's heart! Ethelhard returned to his see; but either before or shortly after his return, Kent became a province of the kingdom of Mercia. Her last independent king, Edbert Pryn, waging war with Cœnwulf, who now filled the throne of Offa, was taken captive; and Cœnwulf gave the government to Cuthred his brother. The beginning of this reign was beneficial to the archbishop. He obtained the consent of the Mercian princes to a recovery of the rights which Offa had transferred to Lichfield; and was the bearer of a letter of Cœnwulf to pope Leo III., in which he was requested to annul the act of his predecessor Adrian. This journey was altogether successful. Ethelhard, with the Saxon nobles who accompanied him, was honourably entertained at the court of Charlemagne on his way; Alcuin sent him his own horse to ride, furnished with a bishop's saddle of the newest French fashion of the time, as he came towards Tours; and "the noble and holy" pope Leo, as the English called him for restoring the honours of Augustine's see, made no difficulty of acceding to his request.

The archbishopric of Lichfield lasted only fourteen or fifteen years, A.D. 785-800, while Higbert held that see.[2] Since this period there has been no interference with the rights of York or Canterbury;

[2] Saxon Chronicle, and Charters.

and Alcuin, who was anxious to see the arrangement of Gregory restored, prays that the two sees may long continue, like the two eyes in the body, giving their light to the whole of Britain. In this prayer also let the English and Christian patriot heartily join.

Archbishop Eanbald, who now presided at York, the second of that name, A.D. 796-812, was one of Alcuin's pupils; and with him, as with other northern bishops and churchmen, he maintained a frequent correspondence. In these letters he now and then exhorts this prelate to check his priests and monks from the practice of fox-hunting, which it seems was even then sometimes too strong a temptation for the Yorkshire clergy. Among other presents which he sent him from abroad was a cargo of copper, to be used in roofing the bell-tower at York, which Alcuin wished to be completed in the handsomest style then known. In a letter of excellent pastoral advice, sent to him on his promotion to the see, he exhorts him to be especially careful of the learning and good discipline of the school at York; and to found hospitals in different places, where a number of poor and strangers might be daily entertained. "Act not as the master of this world's wealth, but as the good steward. Lay not up an inheritance for your many kinsmen; at least let them not make you covetous or uncharitable. You cannot have a better heir than Christ; none who will more faithfully keep your treasure committed to his keeping. And the hand of the poor man is the treasury of Christ." These good designs, however, were much interrupted by the civil discords which now arose in the decline of the Northumbrian kingdom; and Eanbald was for a time driven from the province by a band of conspirators who slew king Ethelred, and was not in equal favour with the succeeding king.

After the death of Ethelhard, Wulfred, who held the see of Canterbury, A.D. 803-832, was not happy enough to retain the good will of Cœnwulf. This prince, following the course taken by Offa to enrich his own family, took many of the Church-lands in Kent to give to his daughter Wendritha, for whom he had founded a new abbey at Winchcombe in Gloucestershire, threatening the archbishop with proscription and banishment, if he did not consent to his own undoing. "Neither pope nor Cæsar," said this imperious prince, "shall make me receive you back, if I once send you into exile." Poor Wulfred submitted to the loss of two of his abbeys, and some of his best manors, to obtain peace: and after Cœnwulf's death, when there was a time for more righteous law to be restored, he with some difficulty recovered his rights from the princess-abbess. It was in this way, and not only by the inroads of the Danes, that the first-founded monasteries, were ruined, being turned into estates for young persons of rank, who only sought to enjoy their privileges, without much regard to the service of learning or religion.

Wulfred was a peaceable, charitable man; but the state of learning had much fallen off since the time of Bede and the pupils of Adrian. In the midst of the troubles of Kent, he was still able to promote works of charity, and many of the religious people of that province made him their almoner. It was a common practice at this time for English gentlemen to charge their estates with a yearly gift, or dole of meat and drink, to be given away at the door of the monasteries to the poor, under the direction of the abbot. At the same time the inmates of the monastery received a stock of provisions, bread, mutton and beef, flitches of bacon, poultry, and cheese, sundry casks of Welch ale, honey, or mead-

wine; or if the day happened to be a fasting-day, instead of meat, some store of fish, butter, and eggs. The abbot was to give notice of such days before the anniversary came round, and there was enough sometimes at Canterbury to feed a thousand of the poor. In giving his orders for such a charity, which he had received from a nobleman called Oswulf, and Beornthryda his wife, the archbishop directs that on the day, "every priest of Christ Church shall sing two masses for Oswulf's soul, and two for Beornthryda's; every deacon shall read two *passions*, or lessons from the Passion-book, which contained stories of martyrs; two for his soul, and two for hers; and every servant of God (meaning the monks or lay-brothers) shall sing two fifty-first Psalms, for his soul and for hers; that they may be blessed before the world with worldly goods, and their souls with heavenly goods." It is plain that this injunction was given while the persons who gave the alms were yet alive; and there was nothing wrong that the priests should pray for them, as we do for all members of the Church militant here on earth in our communion-service; or that the monks should use the Psalm which we say for ourselves and our brethren on Ash-Wednesday; but it seems rather a sign of ignorant superstition, when he directs that the deacons shall read for the good of their souls a lesson from the Passion-book. It does not, however, shew that the custom of offering masses for the dead was now generally received; but where it was, that it probably began in a mistaken charity, continuing to do for the departed what it was only lawful to do for the living;[3] for it is seen in many of the

[3] Charlemagne sent presents of vestments to all the cathedral churches in England, entreating that the bishops would offer prayers for pope Adrian, who had lately died, A.D. 795; "nothing doubting," he says, "that his blessed soul is in rest,

writings of the time, that the devout Christians of the age of Bede and Alcuin were constant in prayer for each other and in entreating each others' prayers. The great truth, that "where the tree falleth, there it shall lie," was too strong to be set aside at once by this growing superstition. Thus, in an old Saxon copy of the Psalms, on the text, "*No man shall redeem his brother,*" the note follows, "Let a man therefore loose his own soul, while he is in this life; for if he have no will to it himself, and does no good while he lives, his brother either will not, or may not, though he will." And again, in early Norman times an English rhyme says:

> Send thy good before thee, man,
> The whilst thou may, to heaven:
> For better is one alms before,
> Than bin after seven.

Accordingly, Wulfred himself in his lifetime charged his own estates with a provision of daily food to about twenty-seven different poor persons, who were also to receive six-and-twenty Saxon pence, about seven shillings, a year, to provide themselves with clothing. This is one of the earliest records of old English charity.

Egbert, king of Wessex, came to his throne A.D. 802. He had passed some of his earlier years at the court of Charlemagne, and was the ablest prince of his time. The Welch in Cornwall submitted to him about twelve years after he had been in possession of his kingdom; and after defending his own territories against the Mercians for some years longer, at length, A.D. 825, by a great overthrow which he gave to their king Beornwulf at Allington in Wiltshire, he gained himself the name of "lord of Britain," which no other king had enjoyed since the

out that we may shew our faith and love to a dear friend." Malmsb. i. 93.

time of Oswy of Northumberland. From this time is commonly dated the conclusion of the Heptarchy, or seven Saxon kingdoms, as the dignity which Egbert gained became hereditary in his family; and though there were kings over some of the other provinces in the following century, they were subject to Wessex, or were themselves princes or nobles whom the kings of Wessex sent to govern those provinces.[4] In a short time, instead of kings, they had the title of earls of those provinces, and England became one kingdom.

But before this union was cemented, the whole realm was to feel the violence of a new and terrible enemy, the Danes. The people who are so called in old English history came not only from the country which is now known by the name of Denmark, but from Sweden and Norway. They had grown too populous for the cold and unfruitful climate in which they lived; and their resource was, to live by war and plunder from the neighbouring coasts. They were wild pagans, and their creed was full of such superstitions as mark a people that delight in war. Their gods were fabled giants and monstrous forms of evil power; their heaven, called Valhalla, was a place where the spirits of the dead were feasted with unfailing cups of ale or mead. And thither all who fell in battle were borne by the Fatal Sisters, who hovered round the field, and chose out the best from among the slain. It was the custom with these people, when one of their kings died, if he left more sons than one, to prevent disputes about the succession, to choose one to reign, and to send the rest with a company of followers to sea in ships, with the title of sea-kings. These outlaws therefore had no way left them for living but by the sword.

[4] Malmsb. i. § 96.

As early as the year A.D. 787 parties of Danes had landed and plundered some places on the English coast. In 793 they had made a descent on the island of Lindisfarne, and slew the monks and burnt the monastery. A few years later there was another descent of these pirates at Wearmouth; where they plundered the abbey, but were cut off as they attempted to regain their ships. The civil wars of the Northumbrians in the mean time were no less destructive of their own internal prosperity. They were so weakened by these dissensions, that when Egbert, after his conquest over Mercia, marched to their borders, A.D. 827, they offered no resistance, but at once submitted themselves to him. That king, however, had not long established his authority, when a more formidable inroad of Danes appeared in the south of England. Thirty-five ships' crews had landed at Charmouth in Dorsetshire; and when Egbert had encountered them in battle, the enemy remained masters of the field, A.D. 833. And in this first lost battle, as an omen of the destruction these invaders were to bring upon the Church, the two West Saxon bishops, having gone to fight for their country, Wilbert bishop of Sherborne, and Herefrid bishop of Winchester, with other noblemen, were slain.

The Danes did not come into the country to take possession, but to go from place to place and support themselves by spoil. Theirs were armies of robbers, quartering themselves wherever there was a space of cultivated country, feeding as long as the supply lasted, and then burning and wasting the land, and removing to a new position. The face of the country, as is observed by the poet who wrote the lines standing at the head of this chapter, still in many places bears witness to the kind of warfare they pursued; as we may find in all parts of England,

and particularly those furthest from the sea, on high grounds and open downs, the oval or circular mounds of old Danish camps. The destruction of property, the famine and misery, caused by these roving bands, would have been dreadful, even if they had been guilty of no worse cruelties; but they were bloody and remorseless, and their swords spared neither young nor old.

Egbert had driven out the first invaders by the better success he had in a second battle in Cornwall, where the poor Welch had joined them, to make a last effort against their Saxon foes. And dying shortly after, he left his kingdom to Ethelwolf his son, A.D. 838.

During the whole of the reign of Ethelwolf, the southern part of the island was exposed to continual ravages. The Danes were often beaten, sometimes they were successful. They had the great advantage of possessing ships, which the Saxons had not, and had no means of guarding their coast. Hence they could make descents where they pleased, and often carried off spoil and regained their ships before they could be followed. But by degrees they came in larger bodies; they began to winter in the isle of Thanet and the isle of Shepey; and the danger was every day increasing. Ethelwolf, however, having obtained a great victory in a battle at Ockley in Surrey, took a step, at such a time marking more piety than prudence,—he went on a visit in much state to the pope at Rome.

This prince, who had come to the throne by the death of an elder brother, had been educated for the priesthood under the care of St. Swithin, afterwards bishop of Winchester. It has sometimes been supposed that he was himself a bishop before he was king; but the mistake seems to have arisen from confounding his name with another Ethelwolf, who

was bishop of Selsey about this time; the name being very common among the Saxons. It is certain that Ethelwolf was not a priest; he was made by Egbert king or prince of Kent, and ruled that province during the lifetime of his father. His journey to Rome, however, at this time was unfortunate for himself and his kingdom. He remained there a full twelvemonth; and then on his return, in his way through France, being now past the meridian of life, he married a second wife, Judith, a daughter of Charles the Bald, great granddaughter of Charlemagne. In the mean time his subjects were very ill-contented with his absence; and Ealstan, bishop of Sherborne, who was a great warrior against the Danes, but rather an ambitious soldier than a churchman, had advised his eldest son Ethelbald to seize on the government. The return of Ethelwolf was the more acceptable to the loyal part of his people; and, it seems, he might have easily put down this insurrection; but to avoid the evil of inward dissension at so hazardous a time, or out of affection to his son, he gave up to him a part of his dominions; and that no dispute might arise after his own death, he provided that Ethelbald should then have Wessex, and Ethelbert, his second son, Kent, Sussex, and Surrey.

The other acts of Ethelwolf, which belong more directly to the history of the Church, were that he rebuilt the English school at Rome founded by Ina, which he had found destroyed by fire; and that he gave a tenth part of his own lands to the support of the Church in his kingdom.[5] This gift has sometimes been supposed to be the beginning of tithes in England; but the notion is a mistake, as tithes were paid long before. They are mentioned in archbishop Egbert's canons, A.D. 740, and were no new thing

[5] Ethelwerd Chron. A.D. 855.

then. It is most likely that Ethelwolf intended to found several new monasteries in Wessex, where the number had hitherto been less than in other parts of England, as the words of his charter say that the grant is made "to confirm the possession of such as already held lands, of whatever order or degree in the Church, and to God's servants and handmaids (monks and nuns), and to poor laymen." But before Ethelwolf had time to do many acts in execution of this design, he died, A.D. 856. His three elder sons in turn succeeded him, and during their short reigns had to contend with parties of the Danes, one of which took the capital city of Winchester, A.D. 860, but was shortly afterwards expelled. Ethered, the last of the three, died in A.D. 871. In his time, the invaders, who had before been allured to the milder southern provinces, made their great descent upon the north, and with such fatal force, that within a few years the whole kingdom of Northumbria was entirely at their mercy.

It was in the year A.D. 867 that this dreadful invasion was made. A large army had landed the year before in East Anglia, where the people had made peace with them, and supplied them with horses. Thus armed for inroad, they rode towards the Humber in the following spring, were ferried over, and took the city of York. The inhabitants of the province were never worse prepared for resistance. Two different parties were contending for the possession of the kingdom. Osbert, the rightful king, had been disowned by a large party of his subjects, who had set up Ella, another chief, who had no claim of kindred to entitle him to that dignity. The Scots had a few years before subdued the Picts, and taken from the Northumbrian kingdom all its territory to the north of Tweed. So that even if they had been united, it would have been no easy thing to resist an

enemy, whose forces, increased by new fleets, soon amounted to 200,000 strong. But the two unhappy competitors, instead of immediately coming to terms with each other, and marching against the common foe, suffered the greater part of the summer to pass, while the Danes were entrenching themselves at York, and making spoil of all the country round. When at last they had determined to leave their private differences for the securing of the public safety, their measures were as ill taken as they were late. There was nothing done to ascertain the numbers or force of the enemy; but the two kings advancing by different roads to York, were both slain, and their followers cut to pieces at the first sally made by the besieged. It was noted long afterwards, that this evil overtook them not only as a punishment for their own dissensions, but as a mark of divine anger for their impiety; for Osbert had seized on the Church-lands in Northumberland, and Ella, besides several other spoliations in the county of Durham, had turned the bishop's lands at Crayke, given by king Egfrid to St. Cuthbert, into a hunting-seat for himself, and had lodged there the night before he went on his disastrous expedition.

Wulfhere, who was then archbishop of York, fled with some of his priests to Addingham near Skipton. Here he seems to have remained, or in some obscure place in Mercia, to the close of his life, about thirty years afterwards. The Danes immediately overran the whole province as far as the Tyne, and wherever they went, their course was tracked with blood; churches and monasteries were left in ruinous heaps; the priests and monks cruelly slaughtered; and the only Saxons whom they spared became the slaves of the soil, or, as their old chronicle forcibly speaks of it, "were made harrowers and ploughers" to their heathen conquerors. In A.D. 875, Halden, one of

their sea-kings, led his army across the Tyne, and completed all that was yet wanting to the work of destruction. The Yorkshire monasteries, Beverley, Ripon, Whitby, and Lastingham, with others of smaller note, had been already laid low; now, Jarrow, where Bede had taught and shewn the graces of a Christian life, Hexham, Lindisfarne, and others, were levelled, many of them never to rise again.

In the midst of this desolation, however, there was not wanting a remarkable testimony to the power of Christian faith. EARDULF, bishop of Lindisfarne, had now for twenty years done faithful duty in his charge, not failing, in the midst of the civil wars which distracted his province, to visit his diocese, and to preach and send diligent preachers to fill the office of evangelists in the north. When the pagans approached Holy Island, he reminded his priests and monks of the dying charge which St. Cuthbert was believed to have given to his friends, that if his abode should be endangered by barbarians, they should rather change their dwelling than bow the neck to do their impious bidding; and that if they ever removed, they should carry his bones with them, and not leave them to rest in what would then be a pagan soil. The religious society obeyed their bishop's commands; they took up the bones of Cuthbert, and also of Aidan, and king Oswald, and set out in melancholy procession from the place where the gospel had now been planted and had flourished for two hundred and forty years.

There were in the monastery of Lindisfarne a number of boys and youths, who had been brought up from infancy there, and taught by the monkish teachers. They had been accustomed to wear the dress of clerks or choristers, and had learnt to chant the Psalms. They offered themselves with the ardour of youth to follow the bishop wherever he would

lead them. Besides these, a number of Christians of both sexes, husbands with their wives and children, thronged together, and followed the monks with the bier, carrying the relics, and the holy vessels and church-books which they bore with them, thinking they had preserved all, house, lands, and goods, as long as they had these sacred companions of their flight. Seven stout Northumbrians devoted themselves especially to the charge of the bier, which they bore on their shoulders over such ground as was not passable for a horse and wain. They took their way across to the Cheviot-hills and Cumberland, where they were joined by Eardulf's friend Edred, abbot of Carlisle; then, seeing the course of the Danes by the fires which they kindled, they took a favourable opportunity to assemble at the mouth of the Cumberland river Derwent, where a ship had been provided to convey the bishop and abbot, with a few select followers, to the Irish shores. The body of St. Cuthbert and the other relics and furniture were placed on board; and those who were to share their exile withdrew with their spiritual fathers privately, and set sail, leaving the remainder of the flock in great dismay when they found they were deserted. Eardulf, however, appears to have taken this step with a doubting conscience; and when a contrary wind and storm arose, he took it as a mark of the displeasure of God, and was right glad when he was landed after some perils at Whitherne, the ancient seat of Christianity in Galloway. A copy of the Gospels, of great value, beautifully written in Latin and Anglo-Saxon, and preserved in a case adorned with gold and jewels, was supposed to have been lost in the sea, but to their great joy it was shortly afterwards discovered on the shore. The Christians at Whitherne gave them a hearty reception, and they remained here for some time; but the bishop was anxious to revisit his

suffering and scattered flock in Northumberland. At length, hearing of Halden's death, he determined to return. They were joined, as before, by many devoted friends, and wandering about the hills and hiding in woods, they continued to assemble round the bier of St. Cuthbert for many months for their daily service of psalmody and prayer. There was at this time still preserved a small monastery at Crayke, the situation, in the midst of deep woods, having protected it from the Danes. Here the abbot Geve offered them a refuge; and they remained four months till the victories of Alfred having restored some degree of safety to the Christians in the north, Eardulf was enabled to fix his see, where it remained for more than a century, at Chester-le-Street, to the north of Durham. The other bishoprics of Ripon, Hexham, and Whitherne, were never afterwards restored.

It is no wonder if, in the ages following, this flight of Eardulf, the preservation of the relics, and the strange escapes of this Christian flock, became the subject of many legendary tales. The almost total destruction of Christian priests and teachers had left the poor people of these northern counties in a state of religious destitution; and the Danish converts, who were henceforward mixed with the Saxons, were more ignorant and more superstitious than their predecessors, and never were equally enlightened or softened by the great truths of Christianity. But it is owing to the zeal and devoted patience of Eardulf, that the Church of Northumbria was still preserved. Without the public testimony afforded by his perilous journeys, it is probable that the labours of Columba's disciples, and the remembrance of Bede and his excellent associates, must have come in that province to a perpetual end. It was therefore with better reason that the Christians of Northumbria in the next

generations were proud of tracing their descent to some of those who had helped to protect the wanderers, and especially to the true-hearted band who had guarded St. Cuthbert's bier.

LINDISFARNE.

CHAPTER XI.

REIGN OF ALFRED.

Where shall the holy cross find rest
On a crown'd monarch's mailed breast:
Like some bright angel o'er the darkling scene,
Through court and camp he holds his heavenward course serene.
The Christian Year.

MAN'S necessity is God's opportunity. When the Christian realm of ancient England seemed to be on the brink of destruction, his providence raised up a man qualified by many eminent gifts both to restore the altar and maintain the throne. ALFRED, the fourth son of Ethelwolf, had been sent by his father at the age of seven years to Rome, to receive the rite of confirmation from Leo IV. It would seem that his father, not then expecting he would ever be called to wear the crown, had some thoughts of training him up for the service of the Church; but the Saxons afterwards interpreted the anointing of the pope as a token of his future royalty. It was a custom in these times for godfathers to be present at a confirmation, and receive the candidate from the bishop's hand; but the pope, in kindness to the English prince, called him his own godson.[1] His

[1] Ethelwerd, Chron. A.D. 854.

education, however, was neglected, or he shewed no desire for instruction, till he was caught, as other unwilling students have been, by the love of poetry and song. His mother-in-law Judith shewed him one day a beautifully written manuscript, with a capital letter elegantly adorned. This, she told him, contained the song to which he and his brothers had lately listened in the king's presence: "I will give it," she said, "to him who first learns to read it." Alfred began to learn his letters; and though good instructors were then scarce, from the destruction of learning in the wars, he from this time laid the foundation of that knowledge which has raised his name so far above the generation in which he was born.

Nothing could be more disastrous than the state of England when he came to the crown. He was no more than twenty-three years of age when his brother Ethered died, leaving a large Danish army in the country, with which he had fought many bloody battles, and with which Alfred continued to fight after his death, till in one year he had met them nine times in open field. But their ships were still pouring fresh forces into the country; and at the close of the year they were masters of all the province of Wessex, wherever they directed their march. The next year they wintered in London, then overran East Anglia and Mercia, and drove the last Mercian king Burhred, who had married Alfred's sister, over sea to take refuge and die at Rome. His wife ended her days in an Italian nunnery. They were now in possession of all England north of Thames, the Mercians offering no resistance. But while they were thus engaged in other provinces, Alfred began to build a fleet, and in A.D. 875 gained his first victory over a small fleet of these pirates at sea. In the following years they were again in the west; and in the seventh year of his reign their successful inroads

had so broken the spirit of his people, that many began to fly across the sea to Ireland or France; and the king with difficulty saved himself, with a small band of followers, by taking refuge in the woods and fastnesses of the Somersetshire moors. The first hope of better fortune shone upon the Saxons in Devonshire, where they slew one of the sea-kings and eight hundred of his men, and took a kind of sacred standard, the loss of which broke somewhat of the spirit of these fierce pagans. It was woven by the sisters of Inguar and Ubba, the brothers of the slain chief; and they are said to have divined by it the fortunes of the day. If the figure of a raven, which was represented on it, moved briskly in the wind, it was a sign of victory; but if it drooped and hung heavily, their hopes fell with it. Not long after, Alfred returned from his retreat; and by skilful marches cutting off the plundering parties, and at length with a superior force shutting them up within their camp at Edingdon in Wiltshire, drove them by terror and famine to terms of peace. Their king Godrun received baptism; and obtaining from Alfred permission to keep the kingdom of East Anglia, whose last king, Edmund, the saint of Bury, had been slain by the Danes a few years earlier, he died and was buried at Hadleigh in Suffolk, A.D. 890. There was a new and formidable invasion again towards the close of Alfred's reign; but he had now found a way of building ships of better force than the Danes possessed; and though the country suffered great ravages, he was victorious by sea and land.

"It pleased God," says his friend who wrote his life, Asser, bishop of Sherborne, "to give this illustrious king the experience of both extremes of fortune; to suffer him to be hard pressed by enemies, to be afflicted by adversities, to be humbled by

losing the respect of his friends, as well as to gain victories over his foes, and to find prosperity in the midst of reverses; that he might know that there is one Lord of all, to whom every knee shall bow, and in whose hand are the hearts of kings; who putteth down the mighty from their seat, and exalteth the humble; who willeth that his faithful ones in the height of success should sometimes feel the rod of adversity, that they may neither despair of his mercy when brought low, nor when exalted be proud of the honour they enjoy, but know to whom they owe it all. And these reverses came upon Alfred not without cause; for in the beginning of his reign he was led astray by his youthful spirits: he neglected his graver duties; and the poor, who came to him for justice against the mighty, obtained no redress. And when his kinsman St. Neot[2] warned him of his fault, and prophesied that great calamities would come upon him for it, he paid no regard to his admonition. Since, therefore, the sins which men are guilty of must meet with punishment either in this world or in that which is to come, it was a mark both of the truth and mercy of our Judge, that he suffered not the folly of the king to be unpunished in this life, designing to spare him in the day of strict account."

Such is the sound moral lesson which this Christian teacher drew, and which, no doubt, Alfred himself drew, from his early afflictions. It is very surprising that a prince, who during the thirty years of his reign had scarcely ten which were free from wars and inroads, and engagements by sea and land, while he was constantly commanding fleets and armies in

[2] Nothing is known further of this saint, whose name has remained appropriated to a town in Huntingdonshire, but that he went many times, probably with the charge of Peter-pence, which Ethelwolf and Alfred sent, to Rome.

person, should yet have been able to accomplish so many of the most valuable works of peace. He not only checked the progress of ignorance and barbarism in those troubled times, but revived learning both by encouragement and example; he invited learned men into the country from other nations; he raised up new religious houses; he improved the whole plan of government and administration of the laws; and became himself the best teacher of religion and restorer of Christianity in his realm.

The school at Oxford, which seems to have been founded in archbishop Theodore's time, or, according to Asser, had been an older foundation of British times, was now fallen into great decay. It was one of Alfred's first labours to restore it; and it was never afterwards lost, till the days when the two Universities became the resort of all the learning of England. Among the teachers whom he placed there was a learned clergyman from France, called Grimbald, who was also, like Alcuin, a skilful architect. The ancient church of St. Peter in Oxford remains in great part as he built it. It is also not impro-

[CRYPT OF ST. PETER'S.]

bable that some portions of the cathedral of Christ Church in that city are of his work; and he also built the cathedral church at Winchester, the capital city of Alfred's kingdom, which still shews some re-

mains of Grimbald's architecture.[3] Another famous learned man whom he invited into the country was John Scot, commonly called Erigena, one of the Scots of Ireland, who had passed many years at the court of Charles the Bald, grandson of Charlemagne, in France. He was a man of lively wit; but his wit sometimes tempted him to make imprudent attacks upon the great people with whom he associated. He did not spare the French monarch himself, when he was in one of these moods; and having been one day very severe upon a nobleman who was dining with them, Charles provoked him by asking the question, "What is the difference between a Scot and a sot?" "No more than this table's breadth," said Erigena, looking the emperor in the face, who sat opposite to him. When he had come to England, Alfred gave him a pension and placed him at Oxford. When he had taught there for some time, he removed to the abbey of Malmsbury, and assembled a body of pupils in the seat where Aldhelm had done such good service to learning. Here, however, the poor teacher came to a miserable death. The long-continued wars in England had tended to make men's minds fierce and cruel; and even the tenderness of youth is lost, when it is made familiar with scenes of blood. Whether Erigena had provoked the youths he taught by his caustic wit or severity of manner, or whether their own hatred and aversion to discipline was the cause, they rushed upon

[3] It has been supposed that Grimbald was the first architect in this country who raised an arched roof, such as is to be seen at St. Peter's, Oxford, and at Winchester, in the crypts or vaults of those churches. But it is plain from Alcuin's account of the church built by him and Eanbald at York, one hundred years earlier, that that church had an arched roof. Florence of Worcester, who lived soon after the Norman conquest, speaks of the magnificence of Alfred's buildings, of which probably some were then standing.

him one day in his chair, with the iron pens which they then used in schools to write on waxen tablets, and murdered him with many stabs.

In the lifetime of Erigena, a French monk named Paschase Radbert first taught the doctrine of transubstantiation, as it is now taught by the Church of Rome; that after the bread and wine have been consecrated in the holy communion, they become the same body and blood which our blessed Saviour took from the Virgin his mother; that their own substance is changed, and only this new substance remains. Erigena strongly opposed this novel and dangerous doctrine; but it is doubtful, as his own work is lost, whether he did not run into the opposite error of making the sacramental emblems only a sign or token of remembrance. He was rather a man of learning than a sound teacher of Christianity. By his writings on the hard question of predestination he gave great offence to pope Nicholas the First, who wrote to Charles the Bald to procure his dismissal from the court of France; and this seems to have induced him to take refuge in England. In other respects, he was a great help to the cause of knowledge, having travelled into Greece and other countries; and his name was long in high renown at Oxford and abroad.

The Church of England and king Alfred, who was the most enlightened member of it, did not receive the doctrine of transubstantiation; else they would hardly have sheltered Erigena. Their doctrine was at this time much the same as was put forth by Bertram, or Ratram, a monk of Corbey in Saxony, who addressed a treatise upon the body and blood of our Lord to the emperor against Radbert's doctrine. Archbishop Elfric and other English teachers, about a hundred years afterwards, taught the same doctrine as Bertram's; and it was this book

which first opened the eyes of bishop Ridley and archbishop Cranmer at the time of the Reformation.

There is a curious story of three Scottish monks from Ireland, who in Alfred's reign landed in Cornwall, and were kindly received. They had put to sea in a small boat without oars or sail; and taking seven days' provision with them, were drifted on the seventh day to the English coast. It seems they had made a vow to live as pilgrims in the first foreign land to which the waves should carry them. Ireland still continued to send out men of learning at this time, and Alfred perhaps employed these monks also in the work of education; but their strange venture shews that their learning was not unmixed with ignorant superstition.

Alfred imitated the practice of Charlemagne and his successor in having a school at the court. Here he himself continued his studies with Plegmund, who became, A.D. 890, archbishop of Canterbury, Werferth bishop of Worcester, and Asser, a learned Welchman from St. David's, who was afterwards bishop of Sherborne. With their help he translated into the old English language many portions of Scripture; the History of the English Church by the Venerable Bede; St. Gregory's Pastoral Care, a manual of useful directions to the clergy; and the Consolations of Boethius, a treatise of a Christian philosopher of the sixth century, full of piety and beauty. In these and other works Alfred did not simply translate from the originals, but often added thoughts of his own. This is more especially true of his translation of Boethius, which he so altered as to make it in some degree a new work. Here his eldest son Edward, who succeeded him in the kingdom, and some of the young noblemen of his court, were trained up, and taught to learn the Psalms of David, and to read books of history and poetry in

their own tongue. His second son, Ethelward, he sent to study at Oxford; and there he died, with the reputation of a very erudite man, before the death of his elder brother.

The intention of these learned labours was, however, more especially to improve the state of knowledge among the clergy, that by them it might be spread among the people. He saw, what Bede had remarked to archbishop Egbert, that it would be better for them to use their native language in the public service of God, than to use Latin prayers, which they could neither explain nor understand. He found that there were but few of the English, to the south of the Humber, who could translate any Latin writing into English. It must be remembered that the Danes, wherever they went, had destroyed the monasteries and slain the monks; and particularly at Winchester they had massacred the whole number in A.D. 867. With their destruction learning had also perished. The other clergy of those times, who resided on country estates or in villages, were generally destitute of learning, and were often employed in the office of reeves or country magistrates; an office which in those days it was not easy to make suit with the office of a parish-priest. But at this time the disposition of the people towards monasteries had undergone a great change. The piety of Alfred had led him to found a new monastery, when peace was restored, at Athelney in Somerset, the place where he had found refuge from the Danes. But there were no clergymen in Wessex who had any inclination to become monks. His first abbot was a native of Saxony, bred in the Christian colony of Winfrid. And here, again, an act followed strongly marking the savage spirit of the time. There were two monks, one a priest, the other a deacon, natives of France, who had come to serve under his

rule; but some quarrel having arisen, these two Frenchmen murdered the Saxon abbot, as he prayed before the altar! The bishops of Winchester, after the destruction of the monks, for nearly a hundred years later, chose to have only secular canons, or clergymen who might be either married or single, to do the service of the cathedral, without subjecting them to any monkish rule; and this was done generally in all the other cathedrals throughout England. Alfred did not interfere with it; but wishing to have a monastery and school for the church at his capital, he built and endowed what was called the New Minster, and placed Grimbald at the head of it, in one of the last years of his reign. This minster was completed by his son Edward, and became afterwards known by the name of Hyde Abbey, near Winchester.

The improvements which Alfred made in the government and laws of England do not belong so much to the plan of this work, except as they shew the progress of Christian principles on society. The division of the realm into counties was probably older than Alfred's time; as it was the custom for the Saxon princes to give *shires*, or shares of their kingdoms, to be governed by earls or eldermen, according to the old Gothic or German practice. By degrees these became of fixed boundaries, and at a very early period were not much different from what they are now. But Alfred divided the shires again into hundreds and wapentakes, and subjected these to a larger division called a *lath*, containing three or more hundreds. Thus the magistrates of hundreds were subject to the magistrate of the lath, and those of the laths, again, to the sheriffs of counties, or *shire-reeves*. By this means a great step was made towards the subordination of the whole country under one plan of government: and every person who thought him-

self aggrieved had the means of finding justice near his own abode, by bringing his cause first before the hundred-court, from which he might appeal to the lath or county-court; and, after all, to the king and his council, if he could not otherwise be satisfied. To discourage the constant occurrence of private war, or quarrels in which nobles and commoners often met together and fought with weapons, and lives were continually lost, he obliged every man to find bail or securities for his conduct; who, if he transgressed the law and was unable to pay the fine, were obliged to share it among them. This was a regulation which made it much more the interest of private persons to keep the peace of their neighbourhood from suffering disturbance. He was equally watchful in the care which he took of the administration of the laws, having the decisions of the county-courts constantly reported to him; and if he found an ignorant sentence, he sent for the magistrate, and threatened him with the loss of his office, if he would not study to qualify himself better. So that it was now a common thing for earls and sheriffs, who had been ill taught in their youth, to be seen taking to their books, and reading the records of adjudged cases in Anglo-Saxon law.

Capital punishments were very rarely inflicted by the laws in Anglo-Saxon times. Even secret murderers, or poisoners as they were called, were only ordered to be banished. There was only one crime which the laws of Alfred excepted from this general mercy. If a vassal or slave was proved to have betrayed his master, he was to die the death. His crime is compared to that of the Jews who betrayed and crucified their Lord. With the same feeling the old Italian poet Dante, in his Vision of the place of torments, places Brutus and Cassius, the murderers of Julius Cæsar, in the lowest depths of

misery with Judas Iscariot. Still it may, perhaps, be doubted, strange as such opinions may now appear, whether they were not founded on something more like Christian principles, than theirs who in these days follow the old heathen republicans in exalting these patriots of the dagger to the skies, and write themselves under the names of Junius Brutus in the newspapers.

We must not, however, praise even Alfred at the expense of truth. In the preface to his laws, he begins by reciting the parts of Scripture which contain such moral laws as are the foundation of all law. Most of these are from the twentieth chapter of Exodus, and the three following chapters. But where he should give the second commandment, we find it left out, and instead of it, after the other nine, the twenty-third verse of the twentieth chapter: "Make not to thyself gods of gold or of silver." Alcuin would not have done this. It is a sign that by this time the popes had taught the English something of favour to the practice of image-worship; for that verse is not enough to express the law, without the commandment that goes before it, and, indeed, speaks of a different kind of idolatry, the worshipping of false gods; while the other speaks of worshipping the true God under a false image. The omission, indeed, falls far short of the common practice in popish catechisms at the present day; where the second commandment is left out, and the tenth, to make up the number, is divided into two.[3]

Another sign of corrupt superstition, which was brought from Rome not long before Alfred's time,

[3] Some have supposed that the Jews anciently divided the tenth commandment into two; but the contrary is evident from Philo's Treatise on the Decalogue. See Bp. Taylor's Rule of Conscience, b. ii. c. ii. 6.

and is mentioned in his laws, is, that the Christians were now taught to keep the festival of the assumption of the Virgin Mary. This festival seems to have begun in some legendary tale of the blessed Virgin having been taken up into heaven, like Enoch and Elijah.

The laws of Alfred shew a regard to the liberty and safety of the poorer classes. One of them enacts a penalty against a kind of grievance, which throws some light on the state of old English manners. No man is to shave the head of a *churl*, or slave bound to labour on the soil, to make him look like a lord's fool or like a priest. The penalty is ten shillings for the one insult, and thirty for the other. It was a common practice, as is well known, for noblemen and rich commoners in early times, as well as kings, to retain a domestic fool, or licensed jester, to divert his master at an idle hour, or relieve his melancholy These poor fellows, who, if they had not much wit in themselves, were the cause of wit in others, were condemned to wear a fantastic dress, and often distinguished by a shaven crown. It would be a coarse kind of practical jest to shave the head of one who was not ambitious of wearing the cap and bells, after the fool's fashion; but to make him in mockery wear the look of a priest seems to have been properly considered a more grave offence. It was an injury sometimes done in cruel scorn by chiefs to their captives in war.

The piety of Alfred was deep and sincere. He divided the twenty-four hours of the day into three equal parts, giving eight hours to sleep and refreshment, eight to the public duties of government, and eight to the service of religion. In this third portion we must reckon not only the hours of prayer and of the holy communion, which he received daily, but also those that were employed in studies and

writings, all designed to set forth the glory of God. The way of measuring time then known to the Saxons, if any of them possessed an instrument for it, was by the hour-glass, an instrument which required continual turning, and was unserviceable unless constantly attended to at the end of the hour. The first clock of which we have any account was sent by Abdalla, king of Persia, A.D. 807, by the hands of two monks of Jerusalem, as a present to the emperor Charlemagne. It was a very curious instrument, with a number of little brazen balls, which at the close of each hour dropped down or played upon a set of bells underneath, and sounded the end of the hour: it had also twelve figures of horsemen, which were made to move out and in again when the twelve hours were completed. This invention, however, was not imitated in Europe till long afterwards, unless by one or two artists, whose ingenuity was not enough to recommend it. It was not commonly known till the time of the crusades, when the Christians of Western Europe seem to have learnt it, with other mathematical inventions, from the Saracens. Alfred had found a description of an instrument for measuring time in Boethius, which appears to have suggested to him an improvement. He caused some wax candles to be made, which at this time were commonly used in churches and at private houses of the rich, of such size and thickness as to burn each exactly for four hours; and by marks set upon them he could at any time tell how far the hours were gone. These were enclosed in a horn case, that they might be secure from the effect of drafts of air, and that the light might be less offensive to the eye by day than if they stood within glass or unguarded;[4] they were always with him

[4] I see no reason for supposing, as Warton and Mr. Soames do, that this was done for want of glass. Bede tells us that the

wherever he went, in his tent in the field, as well as at home in his palace; and his domestic chaplains were instructed to watch them, and at certain times to give him notice of the hour.

Alfred devoted half his revenues to religion and works of charity. This portion was divided into four parts; one of which he gave in alms to the poor, the second to his own two monasteries, the third to the schools which he had founded, and the fourth to any occasional calls for the aid of Christianity, either to help the distressed religious houses at home, or assist suffering Christians abroad. Thus, hearing, probably by the report of pilgrims who had visited the Holy Land, that the Christians of St. Thomas in India were in great distress from the Saracens, he sent Swithelm, bishop of Sherborne, with Athelstan, one of his thanes, to carry his alms to them. These Christians seem to have lived in Arabia Felix, where the gospel is said to have been first planted by St. Thomas or St. Bartholomew; and the inhabitants of this region were called Indians in early Christian times. From thence they seem to have gone to the island of Socotora, near the mouth of the Red Sea, and afterwards sent missionaries to the East Indies and China. In these days a man who wore a pilgrim's dress could travel safely in lands that were full of danger. The Christians venerated a pilgrim's staff; and even the Mahometans allowed the holy man, although of a different faith, peacefully to visit

Saxons had learnt to make church-lamps and other vessels on glass two hundred years before. Nor do I see any reason for believing that the palace of Alfred, or of the Saxon kings before him, when the art was once known, were so much worse than the monks' dormitories at Jarrow, as to be without glass to the windows. The notion of Alfred's using a *stable lantern* to read by, instead of a wax light without a case, is not a happy one: the object of this invention was not light, but the measurement of time.

the holy sepulchre. Swithelm fulfilled his errand, and returned prosperously home, bringing some Eastern jewels and spices with him, about A.D. 884.[5]

It was not only by his laws that Alfred sought to better the condition of the poor, and not merely by the uncertain gift of alms. His will, which, according to the custom of those times, he brought before his Council of the Wise to be ratified during his life, about the year A.D. 885, makes mention of a great number of slaves, particularly on his estates at Cheddar and Domerham in Somerset, whom he had raised to the condition of free tenants, only making his petition to them, that they would after his death continue to cultivate those lands with his son Edward for their landlord, rather than take to a new occupation.

Thus did this good man fulfil the office of a Christian king. His own high view of his duties he has left recorded in his Paraphrase of Boethius already mentioned, and most truly did he act up to them: "I never well liked," he says, "nor strongly desired the possession of this earthly kingdom; but when I was in possession, I desired materials for the work I was to do, that I might fitly steer the vessel, and rule the realm committed to my keeping. There are materials for every craft, without which a man cannot work at his craft; and a king also must have his materials and tools. And what are these? He must have his land well peopled; he must have prayer-men, and army-men, and work-men. Without these tools no king can shew his skill.

"His materials are, provision for these three brotherhoods,—land to dwell in, gifts, and weapons, and meat, and ale, and clothes, and whatever else they need. Without these he cannot keep his tools·

[5] Sax. Chron. A.D. 883. Malmsb. ii. § 122.

and without his tools he cannot do any of those things that it is commanded him to do. Therefore I desired materials, that my craft and power might not be given up and lost.

"But all craft and power will soon be worn out and put to silence, if they be without wisdom. Whatever is done through folly, man can never make that to be a good craft. Therefore I desired wisdom. This is now what I can most truly say. I have desired to live worthily while I lived, and after my death to leave to men that should be after me a remembrance in good works."

Such a remembrance he did obtain. His own life, always weak, and often afflicted with bodily disease, ended A.D. 901, at the age of fifty-two. He left a son to succeed him, who, though inferior to his father in many ways, did much to strengthen the kingdom by his successes against the Danes, and laboured to preserve good government. And this son, king Edward the Elder, is supposed to have founded a school of learning at Cambridge, like that of Alfred's at Oxford; thus giving a beginning to the second English university. His eldest daughter Ethelfleda married Ethelred, earl of Mercia; and, being early left a widow, most bravely aided her warlike brother, fortifying many towns as places of strength and refuge in the chances of war, and yet following her father's works of mercy, setting free her vassals, and founding religious houses at Chester, Shrewsbury, and other towns; which from this time began to be more inhabited than while there was no danger of invasion.

CHAPTER XII.

FROM THE REIGN OF ALFRED TO ARCHBISHOP DUNSTAN. TROUBLES OF EUROPE AND ENGLAND IN THE DARK AGES.

> If the rude waste of human error bear
> One flower of hope, oh, pass and leave it there.
>
> WORDSWORTH.

LIBERTY and religion being thus nobly maintained in England, nothing meanwhile could be more miserable and disgraceful than the state of the see of Rome. After the death of pope Formosus, A.D. 901, there arose a bitter strife for the succession, and one wicked and ambitious priest after another was exalted to a short-lived power, which they most unworthily administered. Stephen VI., who held the office for about a twelvemonth, not long after Formosus, ordered all the consecrations made by his predecessor to be annulled; then another pope succeeded for three months; then one of twenty days; then came Leo V. and Christopher, who gained the chair by bribery or violence; and in A.D. 907, Sergius III., who threw Christopher into prison, and taking up the body of Formosus a second time, as Stephen is said before to have mutilated it of its fingers, cut off the head of the mouldering corpse, and threw the remains into the river Tiber: "An act full of horror," says a Spanish

historian, who records it; "and no wonder if at such a time abuses and false doctrines crept into the Church." But indeed such scenes as these were of no uncommon occurrence at Rome for many generations after this period. And scarcely one good or salutary act can be shewn as done by any pope for more than one hundred and fifty years.

England was, therefore, left to the counsels of its own bishops, and the intercourse with Rome was much broken off. Plegmund, archbishop of Canterbury, the friend and fellow-student of Alfred, now seeing the kingdom of Edward much increased in the west, advised, A.D. 910, that three new bishoprics should be founded in those counties—one at Wells, which still remains; one at St. Petroc's, or Bodmin, afterwards at St. Germain's in Cornwall; and one at Crediton, Devon; which two last have since been united at Exeter. The bishopric of Sherborne was also divided, a new see being founded at Wilton. Three other bishoprics having become vacant a short time before, he consecrated seven bishops in one day. It is said by some historians favourable to the pope, that pope Formosus put him upon this task; but seeing that unfortunate pontiff, by all accounts, died nine or ten years before, it does not seem probable. It is much more likely that Plegmund, who is said to have been a venerable, wise, and diligent prelate, did not need a pope to prompt him to do his duty. And as this was done in the days of that wolfish pope Sergius, of whom we have just made mention, it is much more likely that king Edward the Elder followed the counsel of his father's friend, than the admonitions of such a person as then presided at Rome.

There was great need of good counsel for the Church at this period. In all the northern and eastern provinces of England, Christianity had hardly a

place to shew its head. The two bishops of East Anglia, Humbert of Elmham and Wilred of Dunwich, had been slaughtered by the Danes; and these heathens had obtained such complete dominion over Norfolk and Suffolk, that for more than eighty years no new bishop was appointed. Elhard, bishop of Dorchester, had also fallen in battle; for at such a time many of the Saxon bishops buckled on their armour, and died doing their best for the defence of their country. To his see Plegmund now appointed a successor. At such a time, we may well suppose that, notwithstanding the labours of Alfred to restore the learning of the clergy, the troubled state of the country hindered those labours from taking due effect. Superstition continued to increase. Of Frithestan, appointed by Plegmund to the bishopric of Winchester, it is recorded that he often walked by night with his clerks round the churchyard of the minster, singing psalms for the repose of the dead. "May they rest in peace!" he said, as he concluded his prayers on one occasion; and in the solemn pause that ensued, he thought he heard a sound as of a full choir from the tombs, answering "Amen." He most likely heard some echo of his own voice in the stillness of the night, to which his mistaken piety gave this unearthly character. Byrnstan, who succeeded him, is by some accounts stated to have done this; but it is probable that this superstition had many imitators. Together with such mistaken devotion, however, was often united much sincere piety, humility, and charity. This bishop was the founder of an hospital for the poor at Winchester, and daily ministered to the wants of a number of unfortunate persons ruined by the disasters of the war, bringing water for their feet, and waiting on them himself as they were fed at his table. He died suddenly, in the act of prayer, before the altar; and

his death was so unforeseen, that for a time his friends thought he had been poisoned, till one of them had his suspicions removed by a dream.

A less innocent kind of superstitious practice was the trial by ordeal. We hear very little of it in early Saxon times, though it is mentioned in some copies of king Ina's laws. But it prevailed much after the coming of the Danes. It was derived from the old paganism.[1] It is plain, in the later Saxon kingdom, and under the first Norman sovereigns, that this kind of trial was very popular, and that many had great faith in it. The laws seem never to have commanded it in Christian times, but permitted it, if an accused person chose to resort to it, and gave directions how it was to be applied. The Church-teachers provided a form of prayer to be used with it, and so sanctioned it as an immediate appeal to the judgment of God. The usual cases were, when either a person, who had once been convicted of false swearing, tried by this means to regain his credit; or when a person, against whom there was presumptive proof of crime, attempted to gain an acquittal. He was to give notice to the priest three days before, and on those three days to taste nothing but bread and salt, and herbs and water. On each day he was also to hear mass and make his offering. On the day of his trial he was to receive the Lord's supper, and swear that he was innocent in law of the charge made against him. If the trial was to be made with hot iron, nine feet were measured on the pavement of the church, and the plate being laid on a supporter at one end of the nine feet, he was to carry it to the other. As soon as he had reached it, he threw down his weight and hastened to the altar, where his hand was bound

[1] A practice of the same kind was known to prevail among the ancient Greeks and Romans; and several ways of ordeal are said to be in use among the Hindoos.

and sealed up, and was not to be examined till three days after. Another ordeal was, to remove a stone at the depth of a man's wrist, or sometimes at the depth of his elbow, when the charge was more serious, out of boiling water. A third was, to plunge an accused person by a rope an ell and a half deep in water; and if he sank immediately, he was drawn out and declared innocent. This strange superstition did not come to an end in our native country for many centuries. It was first forbidden by law in the time of king Henry III. about A.D. 1219; but some remnant of the old paganism remained long among the rude and ignorant, who are known to have tried such experiments as the water-ordeal only a few generations back, on poor women who were suspected of witchcraft.

This superstition came entirely from our Gothic or Saxon or Danish forefathers. The popes never encouraged it. On the contrary, Alexander II., the godfather of William the Conqueror, absolutely forbade it; and when it was put down by law in England, it was a benefit which the pope's lawyers brought in by the canon-law; Henry III., in his letter to the justices who were on the northern circuit, giving as his reason that it was forbidden at Rome. It was declared by the canon-law to be an invention of Satan against the commandment, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." But this was long afterwards. The superstitious Saxons compared it to the deliverance of Noah in the flood, and of the three children in the furnace. So hard is it to root out a false opinion once popularly received, to keep faith pure from superstition, and neither to reject nor add to sacred truth. May God grant that his Church, which no longer strays in the wilderness of superstition, may never be delivered over to the bondage of unbelief!

The laws of Edward the Elder and other Saxon

kings contain, besides some notice of ordeals, an order for the punishment of witches and wizards. Before we condemn this, we must remember that such arts are still professed in the northern parts of Europe; that gipsy fortune-tellers may still be seen under a hedge, able to impose on the weak and credulous; and that there is still a slight regard paid by country people to Moore's Almanac, and a hankering after some very simple charms and spells. The reliance which is now placed on such things is something between jest and earnest; but there is still enough to shew how this superstition held sway formerly among the natives of this country. It is most likely that, in old times, there were many bold deceivers, who practised the same arts that are commonly to be found in all heathen countries, and made them a cloak for hateful crimes. It was, therefore, a right act of the Christian lawgivers in Edward's and his son Edmund's reign to put them down. And the law which speaks of them very remarkably points out the kind of crimes which were commonly joined with witchcraft; it passes a penalty of transportation on all witches, wizards, perjured persons, poisoners, secret murderers, and brothel-keepers. Some of these characters may have walked disguised as witches even in this nineteenth century.[2]

[2] I take the following example from a respectable Yorkshire weekly journal:—

On the 20th of March, A.D. 1809, Mary Bateman, a murderess, was executed at York. She was born at Asenby, near Thirsk, A.D. 1768, and having married and taken up her abode at Leeds, at the age of thirty became a witch or dealer in charms by profession. Her instrument was poison. After practising her arts upon a number of persons, whom she seems to have persuaded that they were labouring under an *evil wish*, by administering baneful drugs in small quantities, and extorting money for the spells by which she pretended to deliver them, she was directed by a young woman, whom she had duped, to the family of William Perigo, a small clothier at Bramley.

This is not the proper place to inquire whether there may or may not have been more than cheat or imposture; whether, in other ages of the world, there may have been persons, like the magicians of Pharaoh, who were enabled to do wonders beyond the powers of nature, by the help of evil spirits. The business of true religion is always to contend against the rulers of the darkness of this world; and the law against witches, as well as that against shaving the head of a poor churl, may now be laid by, for other statutes more suited to meet the evil of the day. But it was probably not ill-timed when first enacted; it marks rather the power of Christianity over one deceit of Satan, though others were still mixed up with forms of worship and administration of the law.

The period from the time of Alfred to the Norman Conquest was indeed one of the darkest that the Christian Church has ever undergone. On the continent of Europe, the empire of Charlemagne was broken up, and miserable wars of petty kings threw all back into the old confusion. The Danes and Northmen were making descents upon France and Germany, and inflicted upon those countries losses not much less grievous than England had suffered

This man's wife was in ill health, and it was supposed some evil eye had been turned upon her. The witch attributed it to an imaginary person, whom she called Miss Blythe; and keeping up the delusion, found means to get from them all their money, about 70*l.*, their best clothes, and a great part of their furniture. At length, when they had no more to give, and became clamorous for the fulfilment of her promises of health, wealth, and happiness, she determined to secure herself from detection by putting an end to their lives. She gave them poison, under the pretence of administering a charm. The wife died; but the man, after dreadful sufferings, recovered; and now his eyes being opened to the miserable cheats by which he had so long been deluded to his ruin, he laid his case before the magistrates, and this led to the committal and following trial and execution of this remarkable culprit.

And at this time there was scarcely any power in the teachers of Christianity to check the progress of misrule. The monasteries were plundered, or abused by their own presiding rulers to licentious living and disorder. One name only, that of Odo, abbot of Clugny, is mentioned with respect. He was born in the French province of Anjou, of humble parents, about A.D. 880; and after obtaining a great reputation for his learning and piety, which gained him employment as an ambassador among the barbarous kings and princes of those days, when few but poor monks like himself would undertake the office, he became a great reformer of monasteries; and in A.D. 927 was made abbot of Clugny in Burgundy, where his rule was in such reputation, that the order of Cluniac monks became a new religious order in the Church. It afterwards produced many men of learning; and some monasteries under this rule were founded in England. It is told of Odo, that his piety was owing to the care of a good father, who constantly read the Gospels at his table. He was once on a journey with a few of his monks on some public business, when he fell into the hands of a band of robbers; but being employed at that moment, according to their custom, in chanting one of the daily services of psalms and prayers, they walked on without attending to the danger, though they saw the robbers waiting for them in advance; and this fearless trust in the divine protection had such an effect on the captain of the lawless band, that he would not suffer his men to lay a hand upon them.

In England, when Athelstan, son of Edward, A.D. 938, at the great battle of Brunton in Northumberland,[3] had completely broken the power of the

[3] The place has been disputed; but Dr. Bosworth supposes it to have been here. It seems to be the same with "Broninis urbs," mentioned in Eddy's Life of Wilfrid.

northern Danes, and the Saxon sway and Christianity were restored, the pagans who were now settled in the northern and eastern provinces began to receive the knowledge of the truth, which was always imposed as a condition of peace by the Saxon lawgivers. On this occasion, as before among those Danes whom Edward had reduced to submission, some laws were passed to enforce their payment of tithes and church-offerings, which were not at first willingly observed. By degrees, however, the number of sincere converts increased; and thus it was providentially ordered, that before the second more successful invasion under Sweyn and Knute towards the end of this century, many of their own countrymen were ready to aid the Saxon Christians in the work of the gospel. It is remarkable also, that at this dark time the Welch Christians enjoyed an interval of prosperity under the reign of Howel the Good, who joined together the three provinces of North and South Wales and Powysland under his sceptre, A.D. 907-948. From him these ancient Britons received a code of laws, which are said to have remained in force till the principality was at last united to England under the Norman Edward; and this prince wisely provided for the peace of his dominions by sending presents and doing homage to Edward the Elder and Athelstan.[4]

[4] The Howel mentioned in the Saxon Chronicle A.D. 922, 926, is called in one place king of North Wales; in the other, king of West Wales, which in other places means Cornwall. But Cornwall was subdued by Egbert a century before. Burhred, king of Mercia, had subdued North Wales, with the assistance of Ethelwolf, A.D. 853. All the princes of Wales had submitted to Alfred, who had a viceroy ruling it for him, A.D. 897. After the reign of Alfred, the native princes seem to have held it more or less independently.

Mr. Soames seems to suppose that this Howel was a king of Cornwall, which he considers to have been independent till Athelstan's time. *Anglo-Saxon Church*, p. 163. John of

The Church, however, did not immediately recover from the blows inflicted in these long wars. A difference arose within itself, whether the monasteries should be restored, or whether the Church should be left entirely to the bishops and the secular clergy. Many of the bishops and earls were against the revival of the monasteries; and Wulfhelm, archbishop of Canterbury, who was one of the chief counsellors of Athelstan, seems to have been of this party. In the laws of this king, which appear to have been passed after the battle of Brunton, with the advice of Wulfhelm and the other bishops, there are many enactments for the increase of country-churches, and the payment of tithes, and the respect to be paid to priests; but nothing is said of monasteries. The king directs that his reeves, or bailiffs, on all his estates, afford food and clothing, each to one poor person, from the property under their charge, "as they value God's mercy and the king's love." If this is neglected, they are to pay a fine of thirty shillings, to be distributed to the poor in the nearest town, in the presence of the bishop; not by

Tinmouth is his authority, a chronicler of the fourteenth century. But he seems to have mistaken a statement of Malmsbury, who says that Athelstan expelled the Welch inhabitants of the town, dwelling as they then did conjointly with the Saxons. We have seen that Winfrid was educated at a Saxon monastery in Exeter two centuries before. Edward the Elder dates his laws at Exeter. And archbishop Plegmund founds two sees, Crediton in Devon, and St. Petroc's, Cornwall, A.D. 910. And Alfred in his will leaves many estates in Devon to his relatives, and speaks of "Tregony-shire," or Cornwall, as part of his dominions. That he was also master of South Wales appears from the further fact, that two Welch bishops of St. David's, and one of Llandaff, came to archbishop Ethered for consecration. Edward the Elder, in A D. 918, paid forty pounds for the ransom of a Welch bishop from the Danes. I conclude, therefore, there is some error in the second entry in the Saxon Chronicle, and that the Howel mentioned is the famous Welch Hywel Dha.

the abbot of the monastery. Priests ordained to the second order of ministry in the Church are to be esteemed as holding the rank of thanes or gentlemen. And what is of most importance, a thane's rank might be obtained by a Saxon churl or franklin, if he was rich enough to possess about five hundred acres of land, a seat at the town-gate (in the grand jury), to be entitled to a place in the Council of the Wise (to be elected as a member of parliament), and if he had *a church with a bell-tower* on his estate. There can be no doubt that such a law as this had a great effect in increasing the number of country-churches. It seems to have been passed in furtherance of the designs of archbishop Theodore; but it is almost the earliest certain notice that we have of the progress of parish-churches under the Saxon kings. It has sometimes been supposed that there were but few country-churches in these early times; but it may be questioned whether the number was not better proportioned to the wants of the population than it is at present. There were many parts of the country where there were more than two-thirds of the land left in the old wild forests; and the population was very small, scattered in a few hamlets here and there. Some of these were undoubtedly far from a church, and could scarcely have heard a preacher, unless when a charitable monk went on his travels, or a hermit fixed his cell among them. But still there were many villages in the most woody districts, where a church had been built and a priest resided. In Northamptonshire, where three of the old forests are yet left in part, and which was most thinly inhabited in Saxon times, there were at the Conquest more than sixty village-churches, while the county-town contained eight or nine—three or four more than it has now. In Derbyshire there were not fewer than fifty, and five at least in the county-town.

These are exclusive of monasteries and the churches belonging to them; of which there were three or four in Northamptonshire, without reckoning Peterborough. In the town of Newark and the manor round it, including twelve or fourteen villages, were ten churches. In Lincolnshire, which was one of the most populous and thriving counties before the Conquest, there were more than two hundred village-churches,—a third of the present number, without reckoning those in Lincoln and Stamford, or the monasteries.[5]

Yet it seems right to believe, that at this time the state of society was not such that the business of religion could be carried on without these houses of education for the young and friendless, and of refuge for the oppressed. Besides which, there would be a natural feeling of pity for those who had borne their full part in the sufferings from the pagan foe. By the effect of long-continued distractions the people had become wild and turbulent; bands of robbers infested the country; and "the inhabitants of the villages ceased in Israel." Edmund, who succeeded Athelstan, in his attempt to put these marauders down, was mortally stabbed by a bold thief at his own board, A.D. 946. It is probable, therefore, that many religious and merciful men were at this time inclined to revive the monasteries, as a means of restoring peace to the country, and softening the people's manners.

We must already have remarked how often these religious retreats served in ancient England for places of refuge to unfortunate or aged princes. The time was not yet come when this use was to be discontinued. Wiglaf, the last independent king of Mercia, when he fled from Egbert of Wessex, found shelter

[5] See the map of Lincolnshire at the end of this chapter.

for some time in the abbey of Croyland; and in his warm gratitude to the faithful monks, he gave them his coronation-robe to turn into church-vestments; a splendid suit of embroidered hangings, representing the siege of Troy, for the ornament of the church; his silver cup or crucible, embossed with figures of savage men fighting with serpents; and also his drinking-horn, that the elders of the monastery might drink out of it on the festivals of the saints, and amidst their benedictions might sometimes remember the donor.[6] There was now an unfortunate king of the Scots, who had taken the mighty name of Constantine; but being allied with the Danes against Athelstan, and having partaken of their overthrow at Brunton, was glad to shave his head and live quietly as a monk at St. Andrew's for the rest of his days. An old Scottish chronicle tells his history:

> Heddi's son, callit Constantine,
> Kyng was thritty years and nine;
> Kyng he cessit for to be,
> And in St. Androi's a kyldee;[7]
> And there he liffit yeres five,
> And abbot made endit his lyve.

Athelstan himself, whether feeling something of pity for such a change, or under a sense of remorse for the death of a brother, whom he is said to have caused to be drowned at sea, became a founder of monasteries. He restored Beverley, before he returned from his campaign in the north. He also restored Bury St. Edmund's, as it now was called in memory of the martyred king; and founded several new religious houses in the west of England.

It was a purer spirit which animated Theodred the Good, bishop of Elmham and London, who rebuilt the cathedral of St. Paul's, to found some reli-

[6] This drinking-horn is said to be still preserved.
[7] A Scottish name for a monk.

gious houses in Suffolk, to revive Christianity in that paganised province. And a purer spirit, which led Turketul, a noble Saxon of the court of king Edmund and king Edred, to restore the abbey of Croyland.

The Danes had done their worst in the fen-district with the old abbeys. In A.D. 870, the year of the great inroad, Bardney with all its monks, said to amount to three hundred, had fallen into their hands; Peterborough, with the abbot and eighty-four of his monks, had shared the same fate; and the stragglers, running from the desolate country, now brought news to Croyland of the enemy's approach. It is the most particular account which remains of this dreadful time. No wonder that the early English Church long afterwards had in their litany a petition, "That it may please thee to quell the cruelty of our pagan enemies, we beseech thee to hear us, good Lord!" The aged abbot, Theodore, resolving to die upon his post, commanded the younger and stronger monks to escape, if possible, into the marshes, and carry with them the relics, a few jewels, and the deeds of the monastery, which they had now learnt to value. Most of king Wiglaf's plate they sunk in the well; some precious things were buried; and now, as the fires came nearer and nearer, the party who were to attempt a flight, pushed off in the boat, and gained a hiding-place in a wood not far distant. The abbot, with a few aged men, and the young children, dressed themselves for divine service; which they had scarcely finished, when the Danes broke in. Some they slew outright, the old abbot among the first, who fell at the altar. Some they tortured, to make them discover where their treasure was, and then murdered. A little child, called Turgar, of ten years old, kept close to the sub-prior, Lethwyn, who had fled into the dining-hall or refectory; and seeing

him slain there, besought them that he might die with him. The young earl Sidroc, who led the party, was touched with pity at the beauty and innocence of the child: he drew off the little cowl which Turgar wore, and throwing a Danish tunic over him, bade him keep close to his side. His protection saved the child's life: he soon afterwards regained his liberty, and going back to Croyland, found the young monks returned and attempting to extinguish the fire, which was still raging in many parts of the monastery. From this time the survivors continued to dwell among the ruins in great poverty and affliction, and with their numbers decreasing from year to year, from twenty-eight to seven, then to five; and at last Turgar only, with two who had grown up with him, remained alive.[8]

Turketul was travelling on king Edmund's service towards York, A.D. 942, when he passed by Croyland. The three aged monks, who had now weathered eighty winters, invited him and his train to be their guests. How they contrived to entertain him is a wonder: it would perhaps be known in the neighbourhood, and the Lincolnshire freeholders would send some supplies. They took the minister of state to prayers in a little chapel, built in a corner of the ruined church, told him their story, and besought him to intercede with the king for them. He was struck by this picture of patience and aged piety; he gave them a timely supply for their present need; and after a few years more obtained leave from king Edred to rebuild the monastery, to endow it with some of his own manors, and he became the first abbot of the new foundation. He carried about the old monks in a litter to see his new works as they were in progress; set up a new

[8] Ingulf. Gale and Fell's Collection, i. p. 22, 3.

school, which he visited every day, to attend to the advancement of every pupil in it, and, by a practice not yet quite out of date, was attended by a servant, who carried dried fruits, or apples and pears, to reward those who made the best answer to the pains of their teachers. Here he passed a tranquil old age after his public labours, and died about thirty years from the time of his first visit to the ruins.

The time was, however, now approaching when a new rage for building monasteries, and under a different rule, arose in England, through the influence of the celebrated Dunstan.

CHAPTER XIII.

FROM THE REIGN OF EDMUND THE ELDER TO ETHELRED. RISE OF THE BENEDICTINE MONKS, AND ACTS OF DUNSTAN.

> Me lists not of the chaff nor of the straw
> To make so long a tale as of the corn.
>
> CHAUCER.

NO man was more honoured by the generation in which he lived, and for many following generations, than ST. DUNSTAN. On the other hand, no man has been more charged with fraud, imposture, and cruelty, by the writers of later ages. The cause of this has been, that the monks, who owed much to his efforts, and wished to honour his memory in their own way, several years after his death invented many wonderful stories of deeds which he never did, and embellished some that he really did in such new colours, that their true character is lost. It is very necessary, if we wish to judge of such a man, to follow the accounts which were written nearest to the time at which he lived, and not those which the monks afterwards made to serve their own purposes, or to amuse their readers. He was neither so good nor so bad as they have made him out.

Dunstan was born of a noble family in the West of England, not far from Glastonbury, in A.D. 925, the year in which Athelstan succeeded to the throne.[1]

[1] This is the year in the Saxon Chronicle. All the stories, therefore, of his going to the court of Athelstan, and his ad-

He went at an early age to be educated at the monastery of Fleury, near Rouen, in France, and came back to England with a great love and zeal for the monkish life. At his return king Edmund appointed him one of his chaplains, and, though he was then not more than about twenty-one years of age, gave him the ruined abbey of Glastonbury to restore, and to assemble a society of monks under the rule of discipline which he had learnt abroad. The sudden and violent death of Edmund, immediately after, prevented Dunstan from at once proceeding with this work, to which he might also have thought his own age unequal. He continued to live for some years longer at the court of king Edred, with whom he was in great favour; and it was not till A.D. 954, that his foundation of Glastonbury was finished.

Among the first monks who joined his society, was Ethelwold, who afterwards became bishop of Winchester, and for his great zeal in the same cause

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL.

ventures there, being thrown into a pond for a conjuror, and his strange escape must be a pure invention. It is said that

was called "the father of monks." Another was Oswald, who was made bishop of Worcester and archbishop of York. Through Dunstan's influence the king now restored the abbey of Abingdon, which was put under the charge of Ethelwold, and continued one of the most famous Benedictine abbeys till the time of Henry VIII.

While, however, these three friends were planning great things, king Edred died, and the two sons of Edmund divided the kingdom. It must be observed that the kings were in Saxon times chosen by the Witenagemot, or Council of the Wise, after the death of a former sovereign, unless he had made a will to dispose of his dominions, as was done by Ethelwolf, the father of Alfred. It seems that on this occasion, both the princes being very young, the Council thought them unfit to be entrusted with the entire charge, and therefore divided it. Edwy, the eldest, succeeded to the government of Kent and Wessex; and Edgar was placed on the throne of Mercia and Northumberland.[2] Edwy was no friend to monkhood; and in the year following his accession, for some offence which is not certainly known, he banished Dunstan beyond sea. It is said that on his coming to the throne he gave a feast to his nobles; and here the behaviour of Dunstan gave offence. The Danes had brought in an ill custom of drinking to great excess, and pledging one another as long as the brains could bear; and this custom the Saxons unfortunately learnt from them. Thus Alfred is said to have suffered all his life afterwards from the excesses he was obliged to submit to at his corona-

archbishop Athelm introduced him at court. But Athelm died the same year that Dunstan was born; and Wulfhelm was archbishop A.D. 925-940.

[2] Sax. Chron. A.D. 955. The story of Edgar having been set up afterwards in rebellion against Edwy seems therefore unfounded.

tion-feast; and Edred, at the foundation of Abingdon Abbey, remained all day drinking mead with his nobles. Edwy withdrew from this heavy-headed revel; but his reason is said to have been, that he might pay a visit to a married woman with whom he was too intimate. His departure gave great offence to his nobles, and they deputed Dunstan to go and remonstrate with him and bring him back. He did so; and finding him in the company of the woman and her daughter, using something between force and persuasion, led him back to the banqueting-hall. For this it is said that Edwy took occasion in the following year to banish Dunstan. It appears that he also resumed the lands which Edmund and Edred had given to Glastonbury and Abingdon, and broke up those establishments.

Edwy was married in the third year of his reign to Elgiva, who appears to have been his cousin. The Roman Church, from the time of pope Gregory, had disapproved of marriages between persons so related; and in the laws of some of the Saxon kings it was forbidden. By degrees the following popes carried it further, and by forbidding marriages among cousins in very remote degrees, turned the law to great abuse. At present, however, the opinion in England being that the marriage of first cousins at least was unlawful, this match of king Edwy was a new offence; and archbishop Odo, who then presided at Canterbury, and had the authority of the law to interfere in such cases, obliged the new-married couple to separate from each other.[3] There are some strange stories of cruelty, invented by the writers of legends in later ages; as, that Odo caused Elgiva to be branded in the forehead; and on her attempting to rejoin the king, to have the tendons of

[3] Sax. Chron. A.D. 958.

her legs severed; and finally, that he had her put to death. But as it is certain that the Saxon law gave no bishop any power to require any thing from a culprit of any rank but the doing of penance, and as the earliest accounts contain nothing of the kind, and there is no authority for it but a lying legend written one hundred and fifty years afterwards, we may very well believe it to be a fiction.[4] It seems that Edwy was on bad terms with his people; some of them rose in rebellion against him; and a party of these are said to have slain Elgiva in a tumult at Gloucester. The king himself died at an early age, in October, A.D. 959.

Odo, whom many late writers have described rather as a monster than a man, was esteemed in his own age as a strict religious prelate, and was called "Odo the good." He was by birth a Dane, being the son of one of the followers of Inguar and Ubba, who at the beginning of Alfred's reign had settled in East Anglia. His parents were pagans; but he is said to have shewn from childhood a strong desire to be instructed in Christianity, and, by the patronage of a Christian nobleman, in his native province, entered the service of the Church. He was then recommended to king Athelstan; and having been made bishop of Sherborne, was, in the beginning of Edmund's reign, raised to the primate's office. It is more fair to judge of him from his own mouth, than from such witnesses as have been made to support the evidence against him. He has left behind him a set of ten canons, or Church-laws, drawn up by him in the reign of king Edmund, and a pastoral letter to the bishops of the province of Canterbury. These writings shew him to have

[4] "The holy canons forbid both bishops and priests to consent to any man's death, if they call themselves God's ministers."—*Saxon Homily on St. Edmund's day.*

been zealous to promote the discipline of penitence, and give excellent rules for the conduct of kings, magistrates, bishops, priests, and all orders of clergy; they are full of Scripture, and betoken a character of grave and godly simplicity, tempering the strictness of duty with a feeling of charity.

"Let the Church," he says, "be one, united in faith, hope, and charity, having one head, which is Christ; whose members ought to help each other and love each other with mutual charity, as he has said, By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples." He does not add to this acknowledgment of Christ as the head, that the pope is Christ's vicar, for that was not the doctrine of Odo's time.[5] He says that kings and princes ought to pay great regard to the advice of their bishops, and to obey their directions in matters of religion; for to them this authority is given, and whatsoever they bind or loose on earth is confirmed in heaven. He says much of the great responsibility of kings for those whom they employ in offices under them, if they are unworthy. He says still more of the duties of bishops, and the great danger they undergo, if they do their office lukewarmly or negligently; if they are swayed by love of gain more than godliness; or if they fear or flatter any man out of regard to his person. He exhorts them every year to visit their dioceses, and to preach as they make their visitation. He tells the parish-priests, they must be a pattern to their flock, teaching them all needful truth, and distinguishing themselves by their religious lives as much as by the habit which they wear. Monks he exhorts not to ramble about, or remove from one monastery to another; but, after the example of the

[5] The king of England was the only person at this time styled vicar or vicegerent of Christ; and thus king Edgar styles himself in the acts of his reign

apostles, to work with their own hands, to exercise themselves continually in holy reading and prayer, and to have their loins girded and lamps burning, so waiting for the great Householder, that when he comes he may make them enter into his eternal rest He bids all Christians to avoid prohibited marriages, reminding them of Gregory's rule before mentioned; and pronounces excommunication against offenders who break this rule, or those who marry a nun. This is the only punishment which he thought it lawful for the Church to inflict: there is not a word of branding, which indeed was not a kind of punishment used in Saxon times. It may be observed, also, that in the laws of king Edmund, passed with the counsel of the two archbishops Odo and Wulfstan, the only injunction is, that persons thus wrongfully joined together in marriage are to be separated.

These laws containing more particular directions about the way of contracting marriage among our Christian forefathers, than we find in any other ancient laws of the Saxon kings, it may be well to state the substance of them. They direct that a man, who wished to wed maid or widow, was first to appoint a meeting, at which both parties were to be attended by their friends. He was then to declare, and his friends to give their word for him, that he wished to have her to wife according to God's law and the rule of Christian truth. The woman and her friends giving their consent, he was then to shew to them that he had property enough to maintain his wife; and his friends were to assure this also: he was next to say what part of his goods he would settle upon her, and let her choose a gift for herself. Then, if all was agreed, her friends were to promise her to him, "to wive and to right live," and take security from the bridegroom for the completion of the marriage. If she survived him, the law gave her

half his property, until she might marry again, or the care of the whole, if there were children. When she was to be given away, the law required that the priest should be present, who should "rightfully with God's blessing join them together to all fulness of happiness."

Such was the religious care taken by our forefathers for this holy engagement; which nothing but the decay of religion among us has brought down of late to a lower standard, and made laws to regard it only as a civil contract. God grant that a better spirit may speedily be restored! It was Odo's duty, therefore, having been one of the principal promoters of this sacred law of marriage, to notice what was then considered a breach of it, in the union of two cousins, though of the highest rank, that the law might not be despised. He therefore, as it seems, threatened Edwy and Elgiva with excommunication. The rest of the story is, as before said, only the garnish of an age when legends were written for the entertainment of the reader. He had certainly an extreme view of the importance of Church-discipline, and considered offenders against its laws as "guilty of as great impiety as the soldiers who pierced the side of Christ." But with all this he speaks a language so earnest, that it could only be taught him by a hearty zeal for godliness. "If it could be," he says to his bishops, "that the wealth of the whole world were set before my eyes, so as to serve me in the enjoyment of the highest kingly power, I would willingly spend it all, and with it my own life, for the health of your souls; by whom I trust to be advanced in the pursuit of holiness, and strengthened for the work of that harvest, to which the Lord God has appointed as fellow-labourers both you and me." Surely it is not easy to believe that a man who could write thus, still under a humble sense of his own

sins and infirmities, could have been any thing else than his words paint him to be.

On the death of Edwy, his brother Edgar became king of all England. Two years after his accession Odo died;[6] and Dunstan, who had been before recalled from banishment, and was in great favour, was made archbishop. It seems that he had been entertained by Edgar before his brother's death, and had been made bishop of Worcester and of London, which were both in the province of Mercia. Being now possessed of great power and influence, and aided by many powerful noblemen, as well as his two friends Oswald and Ethelwold, who held the two other most important sees of York and Winchester, he had for nearly twenty years full scope for executing his great designs. The king, Edgar, was scarcely yet more than twenty-one, and in what regarded the Church suffered Dunstan to rule matters almost as he pleased. In the course of his administration about forty monasteries were built or restored, and most of them richly endowed. Among these were the old foundations of Ely, Peterborough, Tewksbury, Malmsbury, Glastonbury, Evesham, Bath, and Abingdon; the new abbeys of Ramsey, Hunts; Tavistock and Milton Abbot's, Devon; Cerne Abbot's, Dorset; and many more. The rage for these new monasteries was so great, that a change now took place at many of the cathedral-churches. Here the bishops had formerly held a monastery in some places near the cathedral, where

[6] A.D. 961. Sax. Chron. This date disproves the story of Edwy's having appointed Elsin bishop of Winchester to succeed Odo, and the silly account of his insulting Odo's grave, and raising his ghost to reprove him. Also the story of Elsin's journey to Rome, and being frozen to death on the Alps. Why should he have gone to Rome at all, when neither Odo nor Dunstan went? The pall was sent by a messenger at this period.

such priests as had taken the habit of monks lived with the other monks; but the other clergy, who were not under the rule, resided in private houses of their own, having an estate for their common maintenance, such as the deans and cathedral-clergy have now. Thus at Canterbury there were the secular clergy, who were in one society at the cathedral of Christ-church, and the monks, who were in another at St. Augustine's. Dunstan did not attempt to change this arrangement in his own see; but Oswald turned out all the clergy at Worcester who did not choose to become monks; Ethelwold did the same at Winchester; and their example was followed by Elfric, after Dunstan's death, at Canterbury, by Wulfsine bishop of Sherborne, and other bishops.

These were unjustifiable measures, and they naturally led to a great enmity between the monks and secular clergy; which was kept up, more or less, as long as monasteries remained in England. The success, which began with injustice, was too often afterwards maintained with fraud. Lying wonders were told of the holiness of these patrons of monkery; and whatever good qualities they possessed were lost in the legendary tales which their admirers invented. False charters were also produced, where the originals had been destroyed by the Danes; and this soon led to encroachment upon manors and lands to which their claim was doubtful, and bred awkward lawsuits.

Another evil was, that the English people not being yet altogether so eager to become monks as the patrons of the new foundations wished, they brought in many foreigners; the king particularly, who lost something of his own popularity by his patronage of outlandish men and foreign fashions.

But the rule of monkhood itself, which was now

established in England, had one or two great faults in it. It required, as all orders from this time did, that the novice who entered it should make a vow —a solemn vow and promise, before God and his saints, in the chapel of the monastery, that he would remain for ever in that rule of life, reform his manners by it, obey its laws, as one who knew that by departing from it he should forfeit his eternal salvation. This was done in the presence of the abbot and other witnesses; a copy of it was made in writing, which he was to sign, and place it with his own hand on the altar. From that moment he was to have nothing which he could call his own; his estate and goods were to be given to the poor or to the monastery, and he was to receive no private gift, even of a book, or writing-desk, or pen; nay, he was no longer to consider himself master of his own person or his own will.

Again, St. Basil's rule, as we have seen, discouraged any offering of children by their parents, and any thing which took away the liberty of free choice from the young, before they came to age. On the contrary, the rule of Benedict allowed parents to present their children at the altar, and to take an oath and make a vow, that they would thenceforth neither give them land or goods, nor permit any thing to be done for them, which might give them occasion at any time afterwards to leave the monastery.

Another bad change was, that the priests who were monks were not to discharge any priestly office without the abbot's leave; a regulation which made them unserviceable for the duties of the Church beyond the monastery, and took them out of the way of obedience to their bishop. It is uncertain how soon this rule of St. Benedict became general in the west of Europe: it had no certain footing in Eng-

land before the Danish invasion; but from the time of Dunstan there was no other to be found in the country till after the Norman Conquest.

The reign of Edgar was peaceful and prosperous. The kings of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, sought his friendship, and did him homage; and by keeping a good fleet at three different stations on the coast, which at regular seasons cruised about to watch for the Danish pirates, he prevented the country from being exposed to their inroads. Some good laws were passed for the civil government, and many very particular regulations for the government of the Church; which no doubt were chiefly the work of Dunstan. Before this remarkable man had completed his career, the death of Edgar, in the prime of life, left him exposed to new troubles, A.D. 975.

Alfere, earl of Mercia, had been an unwilling looker-on while the monasteries were rising in his province during Edgar's life; and when he died, leaving only a boy of fifteen to succeed him, he raised an armed faction, and drove out the monks, and began to raze the abbeys to the ground. Ethelwin, earl of East Anglia, and Byrthnot, earl of Essex, and other nobles, who had founded monasteries or favoured their foundation, raised a force to oppose him. Ethelwin was founder of Ramsey Abbey; Byrthnot had given many of his lands to Ely: "We will never suffer the monks to be expelled," said they; "it is the same thing as to expel all religion from the country." By their resolute conduct these violent proceedings were checked; but not before Alfere had procured the banishment of Oslac, earl of Northumberland, who was thus prevented from restoring some of the northern monasteries.

While the dispute was still continued, a council of the kingdom was held at Calne in Wiltshire, where Dunstan presided. It is said that the senators

were here about to decide in favour of the expelled clergy against the monks, when the floor of the town-hall gave way, and the assembly fell with it into the space below. Some were severely bruised or had limbs broken, and some did not escape with life. Dunstan alone was left standing upon a beam. This calamity seems to have broken up the council, so that no decision was come to.[7] The young king Edward was shortly afterwards barbarously murdered by his stepmother Elfrida. The miserable reign of Ethelred, truly named the Unready, now began. In A.D. 980, and several following years, the Danes came again, first in small parties, burning and plundering; and the poor king, instead of opposing them, was at war with his own subjects. He besieged Rochester, having some quarrel with the men of Kent. Dunstan preserved the town, by sending him one hundred pounds to keep the peace, and shortly after died, A.D. 988.

The honour paid to the memory of the unfortunate Edward, surnamed the Martyr, has been

[7] It is strange that not only Hume, but Mr. Turner and Mr. Southey, have followed the impossible supposition, that this was a trick of Dunstan. If it was, as Fuller well observes, Dunstan was a better contriver than Samson, who could not so sever himself from his foes, but both must die together. What is more strange is, that such very respectable writers should have supposed this, when there is a precisely similar accident on record as having occurred, in the latter part of the last century, to the excellent chief-justice Sir Eardley Wilmot, at a country assize. The floor gave way; many were bruised and maimed, some were killed. The judge was left with his seat "sticking to the wall like a martlet's nest," as one of the eye-witnesses described it. The good man wrote an admirable letter to his family on the occasion, which may be seen in his Life by his son, John Wilmot, Esq.

It may be granted, however, that if the monks had not afterwards made a miracle of it, the enemies of Dunstan's memory would never have been reminded to call it an imposture

supposed to prove the triumph of the monks, to whom he had shewn signs of favour; that they had some ends to gain by having him made a saint, and keeping a day in honour of his memory, which still stands marked in our calendar as the twentieth of June. But it is rather a sign of the natural pity and sorrow felt by our Christian forefathers for the untimely fate of a promising young prince; just as they paid the same honour to St. Kenelm, a prince of Mercia, who was murdered A.D. 819; to St. Edmund of East Anglia, killed by the treachery of the Danes; and to St. Olave, a prince of Norway. Thus the honest writer of the Saxon Chronicle no doubt expresses the public feeling, when he says of Edward's murder: "No worse deed than this was ever done by Englishmen, since the time when first they sought the Britons' land. He was murdered by men, but God has magnified him. He was in life an earthly king; he is now after death a heavenly saint. His earthly kinsmen would not avenge him; but his heavenly Father has well avenged him. The earthly murderers would have blotted out his memory from the earth; but the Avenger above has spread abroad his memory in heaven and in earth. They who would not before bow to his living body, now bow on their knees before his dead bones. The wisdom of men, and their designs, and their counsels, are as nought before the appointment of God." It was this public feeling which led to his being sainted. There is no proof that it was especially the act of Dunstan or his friends, or if it was, that they had any other ends to serve by it. It is more worthy of belief, that when Elfrida, the mother of Ethelred, was too powerful a person to be punished as her crime deserved, Dunstan brought her to a sense of compunction, and persuaded her to do such works of repent-

ance as he thought most serviceable to the cause of religion; namely, to found two monasteries, at Amesbury, Wilts, and Wherwell in Hampshire.

Having now gone through the only public acts of Dunstan's life which are reported by writers of good credit, and those who lived nearest his own time, it may be well to give a short account of his private character. He was a skilful artist, a musician, and painter, an organ-builder, and, according to some accounts, also a bell-founder. Many of the church-vessels at Glastonbury, censers, crosses, and copes, are said to have been the work of his hands. Some of his writings and drawings are still preserved at Oxford. There can be little doubt that he was also an ingenious architect. He is said to have rebuilt not only the decayed abbeys and churches, but some of the king's halls or palaces on a splendid scale. And he was a great promoter of useful arts, which might benefit the Church and the public: so that, as it is said with much appearance of truth, no man since the days of Alfred was so active a patron of them.

One contrivance of his is commonly recorded, as designed to check the prevailing vice of drunkenness. He was the inventor of a way of ornamenting the drinking-cups, which were passed round the table, with little nails or pegs, one above another, of gold or silver, as the material of the cup might be; that every guest, when called to drink his portion, might know how much the law of the feast required of him, and might not be obliged to swallow a larger draught against his will.[8] Hence seems to have come the old English proverb, which speaks of a man as being a peg too high or a peg too low, according to the state of his spirits.

[8] Malmsbury, ii. § 149.

The Church-laws passed in king Edgar's reign are still remaining to us; and these most likely were the work of Dunstan. Many of them are very good, and such as the Church still acknowledges; as, that every clergyman is to do his duty in his own parish, not to interfere with another; that he must not appear in the church, or at least not do any ministerial act, without his surplice; that he must not administer the Lord's supper in a private house except to the sick; that every parish-priest must preach every Sunday to his people. Good directions are very particularly laid down about the baptism of infants; which parents are directed to bring to the font within six weeks from their birth; and to teach them, as soon as they can learn, the Apostles' creed and Lord's prayer; and not to keep them too long unconfirmed by the bishop. "He who will not do this," says Dunstan, "is not worthy of the name of Christian, not fit to receive the holy communion, nor to stand godfather to another's child, nor to be laid in hallowed ground when he is dead." In regard to the education of the young, every priest who keeps a school is to understand some handicraft himself, and while he diligently teaches his pupils, must take care to teach them some craft, which may hereafter be profitable to the Church. When Dunstan enjoins works of penance or alms of repentance to the rich, he bids them build churches and give lands to them; or repair public ways; or build bridges over deep waters, or arches over miry ground; or give alms thankfully of their goods to needy persons, widows, orphans, and strangers; or set free their own slaves, and redeem those of other men. But he goes on to say, as had been enjoined at the synod of Cliff's-hoe, A.D. 747, that such alms were not to stand in place of the discipline of fasting, and otherwise mortifying the body, or going on

pilgrimage. "For it is the most right way," he says, "for every man to wreak his own misdeeds upon himself." So that it was not yet thought that a man could make amends by employing others to offer prayers or masses for him. The works also which he requires of the rich are not merely for the benefit of monasteries, but well-chosen works of mercy and public usefulness.

Dunstan gives many very good directions about the celebration of the holy communion; that it should be administered with attention to comely order; that there should be nothing unclean or of mean appearance about the altar; that the chalice should be of pure metal, not of wood; that the priest should not trust his memory, but have his book before him, and have it "a good book, or at least a right book;" that there should be pure oblation-bread, pure wine, and pure water to mix with it. "Wo to them," he says, "who neglect these things: they are like the Jews who mixed gall and vinegar for Christ." This is rather strong, like the remark of Odo on the offenders against Church-discipline. "Also we direct," he says, "that no mass-priest mass alone, lest he have no one to answer him." He therefore would not have approved of the later practice of solitary masses. Another Saxon bishop, giving the same injunction, bids the communicating priest to remember the promise of Christ to the two or three gathered together in his name.

Dunstan was a man of ready wit, as may be judged from the phrase of many of these laws, which speak of the vices, or indulgences, against which he wished to guard his clergy. "Let no priest," he says, "be a singer at the ale, nor in any wise play the jester, to please himself or others; but be wise and grave, as becometh his order. Let him not love woman's company too much; but love his right wife,

that is, his church. And let him not be a hawker or hunter, or a player at the dice; but play on his book, as befits his order." Could the cheerful humorist, who drew up these rules, be the contriver of such wholesale murder as some have endeavoured to charge his memory with?

At the same time that we refuse belief to this and other impossible stories, we must allow that his proceedings in forcing the system of Benedictine monkhood on the Church were very blamable; that the friends who acted with him were allowed to take very unjustifiable measures; and that the rule itself was not so easily to be approved as the rule of the more early monasteries. Dunstan was also a great promoter of penances for crimes; and it would seem that he was willing to take under his discipline in this way culprits who were more fit for the jailor's, if not for the hangman's charge. This was done to increase the power of the Church in a way by no means to be approved. His was a commanding spirit, that enforced this kind of discipline with great strictness. It is said that an offender, who had contracted an unlawful marriage, finding nothing would induce Dunstan to admit him to communion unless he should put away her whom he had so married, applied to one of the bad popes who was then in St. Peter's chair, and, using such persuasions as were then best received at Rome, obtained a letter entreating and commanding the archbishop to dispense with his fault and grant him absolution. "God forbid," said Dunstan, "that I should do it. If he shews me that he repents of his crime, I will obey the pope's instructions; but while he lies in his guilt, he shall never insult me by a triumph over the discipline of the Church. I will forfeit my life sooner." There can be no doubt that, with this independent spirit, whatever faults

Dunstan was guilty of were owing to his own mistaken conscience, his love of monkhood or love of power, and not to his blind devotion to any foreign authority.

CHAPTER XIV.

REIGN OF ETHELRED. RELIGIOUS NOBLEMEN OF OLD ENGLAND. BYRTHNOT, EARL OF ESSEX. HIS DEATH. ARCHBISHOP ELFRIC. ARCHBISHOP ELFEGE. HIS MARTYRDOM. DANISH REIGNS, AND EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

Full many may the sceptre bear;
But lands their native law must own,
And earls that seek a lasting throne
Must make the people's weal their care.

Saxon Song.

PREVIOUS to the death of Dunstan, the Danes had been for some years troubling the country with new inroads. In A.D. 982, their fleet had sailed up the Thames, and burnt London. There was now no prince like Alfred on the throne, nor any good counsel near it, to rouse the strength of the country, and renew the well-tried plans of defence, which in Edgar's reign had preserved its peace. The power of England was fully able to cope with the invaders; but it was wasted in disunited efforts, while the Danes commanded the sea, and landing where they pleased, carried off their spoils. The weak and ill-advised king trusted his command to unworthy noblemen, whom he had good reason to suspect of treachery, but had not resolution to dismiss. At length when a fleet was

raised, larger than had ever been known before, and the hopes of the country were roused to certain victory, it was found that the enemy, by intelligence sent them from the English side, had withdrawn their ships out of danger's way. The traitor, whom Ethelred continued to employ even after this manifest treason, was Elfric, who had succeeded Alfere as earl of Mercia.

In the years shortly following Dunstan's death, Sigeric was archbishop of Canterbury. He was a man of learning; but his counsels were unworthy of the primate of an independent country; he was the first adviser of paying the tax called *Dane-gelt*, a sum of money given almost every year to the Danes to bribe them to keep the peace. The amount first paid in A.D. 991, is said to have been 10,000*l.*; but this was soon after more than doubled, as the enemy improved the advantage he had gained. It is most likely that Sigeric advised this poor expedient from a distrust of the character of the king, and a despair of better success by more warlike measures.

Even in these disastrous times there were not wanting men, who, if they had lived under a better prince, and had guided the counsels of the state, might have saved the country from ruin. Few of the old nobility of England deserve a higher praise as Christian patriots than BYRTHNOT, EARL OF ESSEX. We have seen him with his friend Ethelwin, earl of East Anglia, after the death of Edgar, opposing the violent proceedings of Alfere against the monks of Mercia. He was in his lifetime a great benefactor to the church of Ely, and had done his part to restore the monasteries in his province. And whatever faults were to be found in these foundations, for which we may justly blame Dunstan and his friends, there can be no doubt that the religious noblemen who protected them were guided by a pure

desire to promote the knowledge of the truth, and advance the peaceful arts, which would, under God, tend most to the happiness and improvement of their country. With this aim they freely gave of their lands and of their wealth. And the cost of rearing such monasteries as Turketul's at Croyland, Ethelwin's at Ramsey or Ely, was something more than the price of digging foundations and raising the walls. They had first to make the ground on which the foundation was to stand; to bring boat-loads of hard soil from the uplands, or shingles from the coast, to bury deep, and drive in with rammers, lest the walls should give way. Sometimes, to bring the stone from inland, they had need to make a road, or sometimes to meet it as it came to the nearest place of water-carriage. Thus Egelric, bishop of Durham, in the reign of Edward the Confessor, being then retired to the abbot's office at Peterborough, made a road from Deeping to Spalding, where the Welland becomes navigable for ships of good burthen. It was made by mixing loads of chalk, from the wolds of Lincolnshire, and sea-sand, the materials of which the roads in Lincoln fens are still composed. The ground being prepared, and the stone brought, the workmen laboured zealously, believing that it was a good work, and that where religion was the motive, they would be well rewarded for their pains. The Saxons at this period were not ignorant of the use of cranes and pulleys, to raise the stones for building. The old Saxon abbey of Ramsey was built in the shape of a cross: it had two towers, one over the centre of the cross, and another at the west end; and as this was perhaps one of the earliest attempts to raise a tower on four columns (the plan followed afterwards in almost all cathedral and abbey-churches), arches were thrown across from one column to another to strengthen the support, as has

since been done by Sir Christopher Wren in the cathedral of Salisbury.

Ethelwin, the founder of Ramsey, was now lately dead; and Byrthnot, in the increasing troubles of his country, was left alone. Perhaps it will be expected that he retired into his monastery of Ely, that he might at least die quietly. He had seen the treachery of Elfric, and seems to have been at Canterbury when Sigeric gave his miserable counsel. But Byrthnot resolved that he would neither excuse the weak nor encourage the wicked by his example. He left a deed in the hands of Sigeric, by which he gave three estates at Hadleigh, Monks' Eleigh, and Lillings, in Suffolk, to the church at Canterbury, retaining only Hadleigh for his widow's use, if she survived him, having no son;[1] and retiring into his own province, trained his young men for war, provided arms and horses, and waited for the fleet of the Danes, which was already at sea. It was led by Anlaf, or Olave, one of their sea-kings, who, with ninety-three ships, after plundering Sandwich and Ipswich, came up the Blackwater to Maldon. The Danish host encamped on one side of the river, and Byrthnot on the other; the invaders having before his arrival carried off spoil, and waiting for the tide to re-embark. When they saw the small force of Byrthnot, the sea-king sent a herald: "Deliver to us," they said, "thy treasures for thy safety: buy off the conflict; and we will ratify a peace with gold." "Point and edge shall first determine," said the devoted warrior, "before we pay you tribute. Nor shall you carry your booty to your ships without a battle. Here stands an earl who will defend the land of his sovereign Ethelred, and you shall perish before you force him from the field." The

[1] Evidences of Christ Church, Canterbury, in Twysden's Collection, p. 2223.

first post of conflict was a bridge over the Blackwater. This the men of Essex resolutely defended; Byrthnot sent thither the bravest of the band of his followers, and the Danes vainly attempted to force it. It was near high water in the estuary or mouth of the river; and as they were thus divided, the rest of the battle was with bows and arrows.

At length, as the tide ebbed, the stream became fordable; and Byrthnot, in the pride of his heart, seeing the courage of his men, sent a message to the enemy, inviting them to a free passage and a fair field on his own side. Here, after a stubborn conflict, the East Saxons fell, overpowered by numbers. Byrthnot displayed the greatest valour, killing with his own hands a Danish chief, and, after he had received his death-wound, laying prostrate with his battle-axe a soldier who had come to spoil him. An aged vassal stood over his corpse, and encouraged the rest not to turn foot. "Our spirit shall be the hardier, and our soul the greater," he said, "the more our numbers are diminished. Here lies our chief, the brave, the good, the much-loved lord, who has blessed us with many a gift. Old as I am, I will not yield; but avenge his death, or lay me at his side. Shame befall him that thinks to fly from such a field as this." The same spirit animated old and young; and few returned from that fatal encounter, when night divided the combatants.

There was one faithful retainer, who had marked the bearing of Byrthnot in the field, and had the skill of a minstrel to sing to the harp the fortunes of the day.[2] He praised the duty and loyalty of many of the earl's gallant followers; but none gave so eminent a pattern, as his lord, of a Christian soldier's death. "When his large-hilted sword now

[2] Conybeare's Anglo-Saxon Poetry, p. xciii.

drooped to the earth, and his hand, unstrung by death, could no longer wield his blade, still the hoary warrior strove to speak his commands, and bade the warlike youths, his brave comrades, to advance. But then he could no longer stand firmly on his feet. He looked to heaven: 'I thank thee, Lord of nations, for all the joys that I have known on earth: now, O mild Creator, have I the utmost need that thou shouldest grant grace unto my spirit, that my soul may speed to thee, with peace, O King of angels, to go into thy keeping. I sue to thee, that thou suffer not the rebel spirits of hell to vex my parting soul.'"

Such a record of the dead is never made, except where the good deeds of a life have left affection and gratitude behind, and stamped something of their own goodness on the minds of the survivors. And surely not Leonidas, or any patriot of old renown, devoted himself with purer love for his suffering country. It was the death of a crusader in a purer cause:

> He lay, not grovelling low, but as a knight
> That ever did to heavenly things aspire;
> His right hand closed still held his weapon bright,
> Ready to strike and execute his ire;
> His left upon his breast was humbly laid,
> That men might know that while he died he pray'd.

The Church, too, was not without a few worthy men to minister at her altars. Of these the most eminent was ELFRIC, archbishop of Canterbury, a man who laboured most abundantly to advance the knowledge of the gospel among his countrymen, even in the midst of all their difficulties and distress. He was educated among the monks of Abingdon, under the famous Ethelwold, "the father of monks," already mentioned, whom he afterwards followed to Winchester. He was then invited by Ethelmer, or

Aylmer, earl of Cornwall, to take the charge of Cerne Abbey, Dorset, which he had founded A.D. 987. From thence he removed to St. Alban's, where he presided as abbot; then he became bishop of Wilton; and on the death of Sigeric was made primate, where he governed from A.D. 994 to 1005. He was the author of the most ancient English grammar and dictionary which has remained to our times. He wrote two volumes of sermons, which were in part translated from the fathers of the Church into the old English language. He translated the five books of Moses, and other portions of the Old Testament, into the tongue then spoken by the people; and by corresponding with other bishops and learned men of his time, did much to keep up a sound knowledge on other subjects, and also on the doctrine of the Lord's supper, before the strange and monstrous notion of transubstantiation was received in England.

"When the Lord said, *He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life*, he bade not his disciples," says Elfric, "to eat the body wherewith he was enclosed, nor to drink that blood which he shed for us; but he meant that holy housel, which is in a ghostly way his body and blood; and he that tasteth it with believing heart hath everlasting life.

"The bread is truly his body, and the wine his blood, as was the heavenly bread which we call manna, that fed for forty years God's people, and the clear water which then ran from the stone in the wilderness; as St. Paul wrote in one of his epistles, *All our fathers in the wilderness ate the same ghostly meat, and drank the same ghostly drink; they drank of the ghostly stone, and that stone was Christ.* At that time Christ was not born, nor his blood poured out, when the people of Israel ate of that meat, and

drank of that stone. It was the same sacrament in the old law; and they betokened that ghostly housel of our Saviour's body which we hallow now."

Elfric turned the book of Judith into English, thinking, as he says, that the example which he gives of the valour of the Bethulians might encourage his countrymen to defend themselves courageously against the invasions of the Danes. His sermons or homilies were well received by the English Church; copies of them were taken by order of the bishops, and appointed to be read in churches.

Elfric required that every clergyman, before he was ordained priest, should have a collection of all the books used in the service of the Church,—as, his Psalter, a book containing the Epistles and Gospels, another of the communion-office, a book of lessons, a guide for penitence, a calendar, a book of chants and hymns, and one containing an account of the saints whose days were kept by the Church. It required some labour of the scribe to prepare copies of all these, before printing was invented. The clergy were directed to expound the meaning of the Gospel every Sunday to the people in English, and the Creed and the Lord's Prayer as often as they could contrive to do it. "We must not be dumb dogs," he said, "that cannot bark: we must bark, and teach the lay people, lest we lose them for lack of lore. If the blind man be the blind man's leader, they will both fall into a blind place. And blind is the teacher, if he kens no book-lore." He exhorted them also to be constantly at their churches, and take care that they were not profaned to any improper use. "For God's house is the house of prayer, hallowed to ghostly words, and for them that with faith receive the Lord's body."

His monkish education unfortunately led him into some errors of doctrine and practice. He fol-

lowed the example of his teacher, bishop Ethelwold, and removed the secular clerks or canons of Christ Church, Canterbury, to make room for a new society of monks. When some of the married clergy expostulated with him, and told him that St. Peter was a married man, "True," he said, "but that was under the old law; when he became a disciple of Christ, he forsook the company of his wife." The wrong step he had taken was not much mended by such a tradition as this; since it is plain from the New Testament, that the wife of St. Peter went with her husband on his travels (1 Cor. ix. 5). The time, however, was not yet come when such doctrine as this was generally received. The canons of Canterbury were restored after Elfric's death; and as yet the secular clergy were at full liberty to marry. Elfsy, bishop of Winchester in Elfric's time, was a married prelate, whose son, Godwin, died in battle against the Danes. Aldhun, bishop of Durham, was also married, having a daughter who became the wife of one of the earls of Northumberland. This prelate is worthy of mention, as the founder of the ancient city of Durham. The Danes were making an inroad in the north, about A.D. 995, when the bishop, remembering the example of Eardulf, took his departure from Chester-le-Street, and carried the church-vessels, books, and relics, to Ripon. After a short stay here, peace being restored, he took his way back towards the place where Eardulf had fixed his see; but when they had reached the spot where Durham now stands, either some fancied omen, or the goodness of the situation as a place of strength, persuaded them to remain. It was then a place fortified by its natural position, but not easily to be made fit for habitation; a thick wood grew on every part of the ground, except the small level at the highes

part, on which the cathedral church and its priests' houses now stand, which one or two peasants cultivated. Here Aldum, A.D. 998, first raised a wooden church or stud building, which was speedily prepared for divine service, while he proceeded to lay the foundations of another church of stone, of some extent and a comely edifice. His son-in-law. earl Uhtred, and all the people between Coquet and Tees, came in bodies to aid in building the church and fortifying the city, which became for ages afterwards the stronghold of the kingdom towards the north.

DURHAM CATHEDRAL.

In the time of Elfric's primacy we read of the last mission which was undertaken by the English Church before the Reformation ; for after the Norman conquest, the spirit of missionary enterprise

was ill exchanged for the crusades. This mission was led by Sigefrid, archdeacon of York, who was accompanied by Rudolf, Bernard, and several other priests; and the country to which it was sent was Sweden and Norway; Olave, a prince of Sweden, having requested king Ethelred to furnish his country with teachers of Christianity. This prince had a few years before commanded the host of invaders in the battle in which Byrthnot fell; but having since become a Christian, and made alliance with Ethelred, he received confirmation from an English bishop, and the king took him for his godson. Sigefrid, after labouring successfully in planting the gospel in Sweden, died bishop of Wexio, in the province of East Gothland, in that country. Two of his nephews had first been martyred, as well as others of his companions, by the pagans; which was also the fate of Godbald, another English missionary, who founded a Christian church in Norway shortly after, of which he was the first bishop. From this mission was also founded another in the Orkney and Zetland isles, which were then and for many centuries afterwards subject to the king of Norway; and the bishop of Orkney, whose see was fixed at Kirkwall, was made a suffragan of the archbishops of York.

Elfric was succeeded by Elfeah, or Elphege, A.D. 1006. In his time the misery of the kingdom had come to its height. The ravages of the Danes were followed by a severe famine; then, after a short interval, the spoilers returned, and wasted the whole country as before. The nobles were at variance with each other, and cruelty and treachery were in every quarter. In the sixth year of his primacy Canterbury was taken. Elfmar, abbot of St. Augustine's, whose life the archbishop had saved, when he was accused of treason before the king, is

charged with the heavy guilt of having betrayed the city to the Danes. It was felt by the Christian people as one of the greatest calamities that befell them in these cruel wars, when their Christian capital, the place from which the gospel had been spread through all the land, fell into the hands of pagan enemies. The Danes carried the archbishop away a prisoner, together with Godwin, bishop of Rochester, and all the clergy and other persons whom they thought able to pay a ransom for their lives. How these fared in their captivity we are not informed. In the following spring, A.D. 1012, there was a conference between the English counsellors and Danish chiefs at London, where the tribute, amounting to 48,000*l.*, was paid down. After receiving it, they caroused largely, according to their custom, and the chiefs brought forth the archbishop, whom they had before urged to pay a large ransom, 3,000*l.* for his life, but in vain. The aged man was weary of the sufferings of his country, and determined that no man should incur further loss on account of a life, which in the course of nature could not continue long. The pagans, maddened with disappointment, and inflamed with wine, hewed him down with the bones and remnants of their disorderly feast, till one, with a savage kind of pity, struck him on the skull with a battle-axe. "His holy blood was poured upon the earth," says the old chronicler, "and his holy soul mounted upward to the realm of God." The English honoured him as a saint and martyr; and his name still stands in our calendar on the nineteenth day of April, the day of his cruel death.

It is said that when Lanfranc, the first Norman archbishop, was newly settled in England, he was not well satisfied with the calendar of Saxon saints, and particularly with the honour paid to the me-

mory of Elphege; of which he one day complained to his friend Anselm, who succeeded him as archbishop. "How unreasonable is it," he said, "to call this man a martyr, who died not for the Christian faith, but because he would not ransom his life from the enemy!" "Nay," replied Anselm, "it is certain that he who chose rather to die than offend God by a small offence, would much rather have died than provoke him by a greater sin. Elphege would not ransom his life because he would not allow his dependents to be distressed by losing their property for him; much less, therefore, would he have denied his Saviour, if the fury of the people had attempted by fear of death to force him to such a crime. He who dies for the cause of truth and righteousness is a martyr, as St. John the Baptist was; who suffered, not because he would not deny Christ, but because he resolved, in maintaining the law of God, not to shrink from speaking the truth." There was much wisdom and charity in this answer; and Elphege has a better title to the name of saint and martyr than many whom the pope has canonised.

There was now so little safety for king Ethelred, that, in the following year the whole country having submitted to Sweyne, the Danish king, he fled to Normandy, to Richard the second duke of that name, whose sister Emma he had married. In the course of a few months Sweyne died; and the Council of the Wise sent a message to entreat Ethelred to return, telling him that "no lord was dearer to them than their natural lord, if he would govern them better than he did before." He came; and his liegemen fulfilled their promises by raising a great force to restore him to his capital. To his aid came also king Olave from Norway with a powerful fleet, and anchored in the Thames. The Danes had then possession both of London and of

Southwark, "a mickle cheap," or market-town, as the old Danish history calls it,[3] at that time. This they had fortified with a strong mound, and posted a large body of troops within; with whom they had a communication from the city by the then London bridge, a wooden structure supported on piles, but wide enough for two carriages to pass, and surmounted by towers at certain intervals, and a breastwork on the side which looked down the stream. The object of the English and their allies was to cut off this communication; an exploit, which, under the directions of Olave, they achieved. He constructed, from the materials found in old houses near the river, some wide platforms or floating batteries; these were stretched over the decks of his ships, so that while the fighting men could annoy the enemy from the batteries, the rowers might work the vessels below. Rowing up to the bridge, under a heavy shower of stones and javelins from the Danes behind the breastwork, they succeeded, however, in tying strong cables round the wooden piles or piers, fastening the other end to the floating batteries. It was now only necessary to row off again with all the force they could apply; and the wooden piers, loosened by many tugs and pulls in all directions, at length gave way. Many of the Danes were drowned in the river; the rest fled into the city, or into Southwark; which place being stormed by the Saxons, those in London surrendered. There can be little doubt that gratitude for the remembrance of this service led the English to preserve the memory of St. Olave in the churches called by his name at each end of London bridge. The conversion of this brave warrior to the Christian faith is said to have been owing to an interview

[3] Snorro, in Johnstone's Collection, p. 89-92.

with a hermit in the Scilly islands, whom he met with in one of his naval expeditions, and who informed him of some danger that awaited him. This led to his request for the mission from England, which planted Christianity among his countrymen; and to his subsequent alliance with Ethelred. We cannot but feel sorrow that it should also have led to his untimely death. The enmity of Knute, the son of Sweyne, stirred up factions against him in his own country; and he was slain in a tumult of his own subjects, A.D. 1030.

Ethelred, by the bravery and skill of Olave, was thus restored to his kingdom; but his confidence was as ill-placed as ever. Edric, earl of Mercia, a worse traitor than his father Elfric, after ruining his cause, and murdering most of the loyal nobles that remained, went over to Knute or Canute, who had succeeded to his father's power. In A.D. 1016 Ethelred died; and though his warlike son, Edmund Ironside, for a short time raised the hopes of the Saxons, his early death, and the destruction of their best forces at Assingden, or Essendon, in Hertfordshire, left them no choice but submission.

Knute did one act of public justice soon after Edmund's death, in punishing Edric's treasons by a well-merited bloody end. In the beginning of his reign he was guilty of an act of cruel homicide to secure his throne, having slain a brother of Edmund's who was heir to the kingdom. He then espoused the widow of Ethelred, who had been the second wife of that monarch, Emma of Normandy. The country by degrees became settled, though the different races of Saxons in the west, Mercians in the midland, and Danes in the north, retained some differences of coinage and other customs. In the first years of Knute, however, a grievous inroad was made into Northumberland by the Scots, who destroyed

great numbers of the inhabitants, carried off greater numbers whom they reduced to slavery, and left the country almost desolate.

The Danes, at this second invasion, do not appear to have been such relentless enemies of Christianity as at the first. Knute professed himself a Christian; and by the advice of Ethelnoth, a noble Saxon whom the Church had elected to the see of Canterbury, he sanctioned some good laws both in Church and state. He also founded a religious house at Essendon, where he had obtained his decisive victory, and aided with benefactions three or four older foundations. He seems evidently to have considered it necessary to his safety that he should establish Christianity by law. "First of all," his code of laws begins, "let men above all other things ever love one God, and constantly keep one Christian faith; and let them love and with right truth obey king Knute." He declares that he will administer equal justice to rich and poor, and distinguish between offenders, young or old, misleading or misled. He directs his magistrates to shew mercy, and not to inflict death for slight offences, remembering the prayer, "Forgive as we forgive." "God's image in man, and his handiwork, which he so dearly bought, is not to be wasted or defaced for a small matter." To the same purpose Alfred had bidden his judges, when they sat on the seat of justice, to remember the sentence, "What ye would that other men do to you, do ye to other men." He who thinks on this, he said, before he dooms in a question of right, will need no other rule. There is the same repeated here.

Among the heathenish practices forbidden, besides the worshipping of idols, sun and moon, or flowing streams, wells or fountains, or stones, or any kind of tree, is a repetition of the law against witches, wizards, and poisoners, as in Edward the Elder's

time; and mention is made of the practice of heathen witches in drawing lots, or burning sticks, or by other juggling tricks "framing murder's work" against life or limb. There can be no doubt from this exact description, that there were cheats and profligates, who were still in the habit of practising such malicious charms.[4]

In all these laws of old England religion and law were joined together; and God forbid that they should ever be parted asunder. But in these more simple times the style of the laws is often that of a sermon, which was the more natural when the clergy were the principal lawgivers, and the way of publishing the laws was for the bishops and the clergy to read them to an assembly of the people. "We direct," says one of the laws of king Knute, "that each Christian man rightly understand his belief, and learn by heart the creed and Lord's prayer. For with the one will he rightly pray to God, and

[4] The worthy archbishop Bradwardine, who flourished in the reigns of the Norman Edwards, and died A.D. 1349, tells a story of a witch, who was attempting to impose on the simple people in his time. It was a fine summer's night, and the moon was suddenly eclipsed. "Make me good amends," said she, "for old wrongs; or I will bid the sun also to withdraw his light from you." Bradwardine, who had studied the Arabian astronomers, was more than a match for this simple trick, without calling in the aid of Saxon law. "Tell me," he said, "at what time you will do this; and we will believe you. Or if you will not tell me, I will tell you when the sun or the moon will next be darkened, in what part of their orb the darkness will begin, how far it will spread, and how long it will continue." It is needless to add that the witch was quite dumb-founded. This was two hundred years before the Reformation. How miserable to think that one hundred years after it, in the sixteen years of Cromwell and the Long Parliament, more than 300 unhappy persons were tried for witchcraft, and the greater part were executed! There had been only fifteen executions for a century before, and probably not so many suffered by Saxon ordeals.

with the other declare a right belief in him. Christ himself first spake the Lord's prayer, and taught it to his learning-knights (the Apostles). In that godly prayer are seven petitions. He that hath his heart in tune with them, speedeth his errands to God in every need that man may feel, both for this life and for that which is to come. But how may ever man pray it inwardly to God, except he have inwardly right belief towards God? Never after death will he be in Christ's company in holy rest, nor here in life is he meet to partake the holy housel (the communion), nor is he truly a Christian, who will not learn the creed."

It is remarkable that these laws contain almost the earliest mention of the pope as having any legislative control over the English clergy. They direct that if a priest commit a murder, he is to be banished to a place which the pope shall direct. They appoint St. Dunstan's day to be kept, as well as king Edward the martyr's; and in one or two of their enactments shew that the archbishop, who was the chief adviser, was a friend of monkhood: as, for example, whereas it was before ordered that every priest should be held equal in rank to an inferior thane or gentleman, they were now told that they were to be unmarried, if they valued this distinction In almost all other respects they shew a spirit of mildness and piety.

Knute had a prosperous reign of nearly twenty years, being for the greatest part of the time king of Norway and Denmark as well as of England. He taxed the English at first heavily, exacting more than 80,000*l.* for Dane-gelt on his coming to the throne; but he repressed the Scots in the north, and kept his army in subjection, so that there was no plundering or burning in his time; and this, after the long sufferings of the country, was cheaply purchased at any

price. His two sons, Harold and Harthacnute, succeeded in turn to a short reign; the younger dying, as it appears, at a drunken feast, in A.D. 1042. The Saxons, finding the line of Knute come to an end, sent for Edward, surnamed the Confessor, the last surviving son of Ethelred, from Normandy; and enjoyed a time of peace and prosperity, disturbed only by the factions of earl Godwin and his sons, and the Norman favourites of the king, until the death of Edward made room for the ambition of a greater than earl Godwin, William the Conqueror.

During the twenty-four years of Edward the Confessor, the English Church was quietly governed. The king, from his Norman education, was biassed in favour of foreign churchmen, and made many of his chaplains bishops, who were Lorrainers or Normans by birth. One of these, Herman, having obtained the see of Wilton, created in Edward the Elder's reign, found means to unite it with Sherborne; and not agreeing well with the clergy at those places, removed his bishopric to Old Sarum, where it remained for about one hundred and seventy years. Robert, a monk of Jumieges, having been made, in A.D. 1050, archbishop of Canterbury, and William, another Norman, bishop of London, and Ulf of Dorchester, were banished by earl Godwin's faction; but William, who was much esteemed, was soon afterwards restored.[5] He was a great benefactor to the city of London by his influence with William the Conqueror. Leofric, bishop of Exeter, though a Burgundian by birth, suited himself so well

[5] The story of Robert's accusing the queen-mother of incontinence, and how, by St. Swithin's help, she walked over the burning ploughshares, and that this proof of her innocence led to Robert's banishment, must be a fiction. The lady was at this time, if she was living, about seventy years of age at least, for she was married to Ethelred in A.D. 1002.

to his adopted country, and took such pains to preserve old English books in his library, that his name is still remembered as one of the best patrons of learning in Saxon times. But these were exceptions. The natural inclination of foreign bishops would be to bring in foreign clergy. Another effect of Edward's foreign preferences was, that with him began the mischievous system of founding Alien Priories. A priory was a religious house in subjection to an abbey, governed by a monk sent from the abbey, and obedient to the laws of the society to which it was subjected. This was a new kind of foundation, which began in England at this time, and helped to raise the power of the monasteries. But Edward made his priories subject not to any English house, but to the abbeys of Normandy: St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, to St. Michael's Mount near Avranches in France; Steyning in Sussex, to the abbey of Fescamp near Rouen; Deerhurst in Gloucestershire, to St. Denys the famous abbey near Paris, where the kings of France were all buried. This way of giving English property to the French or Norman Church planted little colonies of Normans in England, who were ready, when the time came, to advance the interests of the Conqueror.

Earl Godwin's power stood in opposing these proceedings; but as he was a bold unscrupulous man, and his sons more profligate, his cause was not such as to command the united support of the country. Leofric, earl of Mercia, had been in high trust with Knute, and he continued to exercise a useful influence with Edward. He was also liberal in his gifts to the Church, founding several famous abbeys, at Coventry, at Chester, at Wenlock in Shropshire, and at Derby. The famous Siward, earl of Northumberland, who put down the Scottish usurper Macbeth, was of Danish extraction, and had something

of religious feeling joined to his warlike virtues. He was the founder of a monastery at York, which is supposed to have stood on the spot now occupied by the ruins of St. Mary's abbey. This is the only minster which seems to have been built in the north of England, as a new foundation, since the coming of the Danes. Here Siward was buried, as he had desired, having been laid out, as he is said to have died, with his armour on.

It is pleasing to see, at the close of the Saxon period, that the enmity between the Welch and English Churches had been much softened. The unfortunate Ethelred had made a mutual alliance with the mountaineers against the Danes, which at least put a stop to their injuries committed on each other. The Welch bishops after this came sometimes on friendly visits to the English. There was now, in Knute's and Edward's reign, A.D. 1012-1056, a good bishop of Hereford named Athelstan, who had rebuilt his cathedral church, and for his good deeds was called "the worthy." During the last thirteen years of his life he had become totally blind, and was unable to discharge any of his public duties. All this time Tremorin, bishop of St. David's, regularly came to visit and confirm for him; and his visits were accepted well by the English, who knew him to be a religious and holy man. And though war was shortly afterwards renewed, when these pious prelates were in their graves, and Leofgar, a warlike priest, who succeeded Athelstan, was slain in battle by Griffith ap Llewellyn, this beginning of unity no doubt led to a more friendly spirit, which at length joined together Briton and Saxon by a firmer bond than conquest.

CHAPTER XV.

TROUBLES AND CHANGES MADE IN THE CHURCH BY THE NORMAN CONQUEST. LAST SAXON BISHOPS: ALDRED, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK; WULFSTAN, BISHOP OF WORCESTER. WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR, AND LANFRANC.

Hard steel succeeded then;
And stubborn as the metal were the men.

DRYDEN.

EDWARD the Confessor had just witnessed the consecration of Westminster, which he had rebuilt and largely endowed as a Benedictine abbey, when he died on Epiphany-eve, A.D. 1066. His abbey still remains, as the place where the kings of England from the time of the Conquest have received their earthly crown; but of these none were to be heirs in blood to the pious founder.

William had visited England fifteen years before, and had made some stay at the court of his cousin. There seems to have been an expectation among the Saxons that he would set up a claim to the throne; and this, perhaps, made them more readily pass over Edgar Atheling, the grandson of Edmund Ironside, whose youth and want of ability were unequal to the public danger, and allow Harold, son of earl Godwin, the late king's brother-in-law, to take the government. But in the following autumn, Tosti, Harold's brother, who thought his own claim as good, brought over the king of Norway with a large

fleet to support his pretensions; and scarcely had the party of Harold defeated and slain these invaders in the north, when they heard within five days afterwards that William was landed. The battle of Hastings followed; and though the grandsons of earl Leofric, Edwin and Morcar, and Waltheof, son of Siward, and other Saxon nobles, made many efforts to regain their liberty, the end was only to bring their country more completely into subjection to a foreign yoke. By degrees all the great estates which these earls had held were given to William's Norman barons; and the old possessors every where banished and outlawed, or in the next generation reduced to occupy as tenants the lands that were once their own. The worst calamity, however, fell upon the poorer classes. The opposition that William had met with in the west and in the north provoked him widely to lay waste the country; and thousands are said to have died of famine.

The Normans, who now came into possession of the fairest portion of England, were a people of the same original stock as the Danes. One of their chiefs or sea-kings named Rolla or Rollo, had gained a settlement for his followers in France, in the reign of king Alfred; and his descendants had ruled there with the title of dukes of Normandy for nearly two hundred years. At first these invaders had burnt and plundered, much as they did in England; but finding less resistance, they had by degrees become settled, and being for the most part at peace with the French, had adopted their language, learnt their manners, and for some length of time before the Conquest had professed the Christian religion.

William, at his first coming to the crown, had pleaded as his title the will of his cousin Edward; but distrust of the Saxons, and the difficulty of securing his new kingdom, made him shortly drop this

plea for the right of conquest. He indeed treated the Church as a conqueror, no less than the state. In the course of a few years almost every Englishman was removed, or had given room by death, for Normans to succeed them as bishops and abbots of the principal monasteries; and the only way for the native clergy to obtain even subordinate offices was to conform their manners to the new possessors, and learn their language.

Stigand archbishop of Canterbury, and Ethelsy abbot of St. Augustine's, were among the first who fell under the Conqueror's displeasure. It is a common tradition that these two churchmen were the advisers of a bold stratagem practised on the invaders by the freeholders of Kent, who are said to have assembled in great force at Swanscombe just after the battle of Hastings, and, disguising their position by large boughs of trees, took the Conqueror unawares, and forced him to grant them better terms than he imposed upon the rest of the nation. The country people in this part of Kent still make it their boast that their fathers never were conquered; and it is a remaining proof of the truth of the tradition, that the customs respecting property in the weald of Kent still keep more of the Saxon character than is to be found in other parts of England. Stigand appeared after this to be received into favour with William; but he soon took occasion to deprive him of his archbishopric, on the plea that he had intruded into it while Robert of Jumieges was still living, and that pope Benedict X., who gave him his pall, was never properly elected pope. The means by which this was done was by sending to pope Alexander II., and desiring him to send a legate or ambassador into the country to act with his authority. He sent Ermenfrid, bishop of Sion in Switzerland, by whom Stigand was deposed.

And this is the first instance of a pope's legate being received in England. Ethelsy, finding the Normans were not likely to spare him, and that they began to seize on the lands of his abbey, got together such valuables as he could, and sailed to Denmark, where many Saxons took refuge, and many others in Scotland and Ireland, at this crisis. Stigand for the rest of his life remained imprisoned in a monastery at Winchester. He is accused of having been a very avaricious man; and this charge is supported by the awkward fact that he held the two sees of Canterbury and Winchester together. But the accounts we have of him come chiefly from Norman writers, who were no friends to his memory.

Egelwin, bishop of Durham, had continued in possession of his see for about three years after the Conquest, when William, who had laid waste all the country between York and Durham in revenge for an insurrection of the Saxons in the north, sent a baron called Robert Comyn to govern the province of Northumberland. Comyn came to Durham with a body of nine hundred Normans. The bishop, knowing the temper of the Northumbrians, and seeing that his force was insufficient, bade him be on his guard against a surprise; but he neglected the warning, thinking that the dread of William's vengeance would secure him from danger. His followers began to commit some excesses on the inhabitants; and the people, seeing him unguarded, rose in great numbers, took Durham, besieged and burnt the bishop's house with Comyn in it, and slew his Normans to a man. This dreadful calamity was the ruin of Egelwin. He had entertained the unfortunate baron with all courteous hospitality and honour; but after what had happened, he foresaw that there would be no way of retaining William's confidence. He resolved, after some hesitation, to join Hereward

at Ely, the last Saxon who held out against the foreign yoke. The Norman, on hearing this, seized his brother Egelric, who had formerly been bishop of Durham, but had now retired for some years into the abbey of Peterborough, where we have seen him expending his wealth in works of public usefulness and charity. Him he sent prisoner to Westminster, where he patiently ended his days in mortification and prayer, and was honoured as a saint after his death. Egelwin, with earl Morcar and others, surrendered in A.D. 1071; and being imprisoned at Abingdon, is said to have died heart-broken, refusing to take the sustenance necessary to support life.[1]

Still a few Saxons were left, who by more happy circumstances had made their peace with William, or gained respect from his imperious temper. Egelric, bishop of Selsey, after whose death the see was removed to Chichester, in his infirm old age was honoured by the Conqueror as an interpreter of the Saxon laws. He received his crown from the hands of ALDRED, archbishop of York. Aldred had advised with the citizens of London, after the battle of Hastings, about proclaiming Edgar Atheling; but as there was no help at hand, it was determined to receive William, who lost no time in securing his advantage. The see of York had very slowly reco-

[1] This is told by a trustworthy chronicler, Simeon of Durham; and it bears a remarkable likeness to another anecdote of the time, in the Chronicle of the Cid, the great champion of Spain, who was the contemporary of William the Conqueror. Count Raymond of Barcelona, being taken prisoner by the Cid, in like manner disdaining life, refused the food which was offered him: "Non combré un bocado," says he,—

"I will not eat one mouthful, not for all the wealth of Spain;
Not to redeem my body's life, or my soul from mortal pain,
Since by such ragged rascal loons I have been forced to yield."

It was with great difficulty that the Cid broke this stubbornness by offering him his liberty without ransom. But poor Egelwin was in less merciful hands.

RIPON CATHEDRAL.

vered itself from the inroads of the Danes; and it was for a long time so impoverished, these invaders having seized on the Church-lands, which were not restored, that it was the common practice from the time of Alfred for the archbishops of York to hold the bishopric of Worcester with that see, as had been done by Dunstan's friend Oswald and many others. Aldred had held both for about three years in the reign of Edward the Confessor; and while he was at Worcester, which he held previously, he founded the abbey-church at Gloucester, A.D. 1058 a foundation which has since the Reformation become a bishop's see. After he came to York, he became also the founder or restorer of Ripon Min-

ster, which has remained from his time, and now at length has been made once more, what it was in the first ages of English Christianity, the church of a Christian bishop. He was a man whose talents had recommended him to offices of high trust with Edward the Confessor, having been sent on an embassy to the German emperor Henry III. After founding his church at Gloucester, he went on a journey to the Holy Land, not as a pilgrim, but worthily attended; and there, as the old chronicle speaks of him, "betook himself to God," solemnly renewing his vows of obedience, and devoting himself with prayer and fasting more earnestly to his Saviour's service. In advising his countrymen to submit to William, he gave the counsel which eventually proved to be the best; but his was no mean submission. When he heard of a Norman baron, who had begun to build a castle within the precincts of the cathedral-close at Worcester, he hastened to the place, and by his bold denunciations of the wrath of God against such sacrilege, he alarmed the offender's conscience, and put a stop to his attempt.[2] Besides this, it is said that he did much while he lived to soften the fierce spirit of William; and bound him by a religious promise to preserve his people, and defend the rights of Christianity.[3] It was happy for him that he died just before the fatal attempt of the Saxon nobles at York, A.D. 1069, when the cathedral was burnt to the ground, and the dreadful slaughter and wide-wasting famine that followed laid desolate the whole county. Yet even then the respect for Aldred's memory seems to have had some weight

[2] His address is said to have begun in very plain Saxon: "Hightest thou Urse? Have thou God's curse:" i. e. Art thou called Urse? &c., that being the name of the Norman baron. Malmsbury, de Pontiff. l. iii.

[3] William of Newborough; quoted by Hooker, E. P. vii. 1

with the revengeful Conqueror. When, fifteen years afterwards, the survey of Domesday Book was taken, almost the only estate that was left populous and prosperous was the archbishop's at Sherborne, a little southward of York. This still continued to pay the land-tax as in Edward's time, while the manor of Whitby had fallen from 112*l.* to sixty shillings, and others in much the same proportion, being left without dwellings or inhabitants!

WULFSTAN, bishop of Worcester, was a man whose holy simplicity of life gained him also a peaceful possession of his see both in the reign of the Conqueror and William Rufus. There was indeed an attempt made to deprive him of it. When the removal of Stigand had enabled the Norman churchmen to follow up in the Church the pattern their master had set them in the state, there was a council held in Westminster Abbey, under Lanfranc the new primate, in which many English prelates and priests were displaced; and among other pretexts, it seems that ignorance of the Norman or French language was then thought a sufficient reason for depriving them. Wulfstan was called to give up his pastoral staff. He arose, and holding it in his hand, "I confess," he said, "I am not worthy of this dignity, nor sufficient for its duties. I knew it when the clergy elected me, when the prelates forced it upon me, and my master summoned me to the office. But you require of me the staff which you did not deliver, and take from me the honour which you did not confer. I am ready to obey the decree of this holy council; but I resign the staff not to you, but to him by whose authority I received it." With these words he advanced to the tomb of king Edward, and, as if addressing himself to the dead, "Master," he said, "thou knowest how unwillingly I took upon myself this charge, forced

upon me more by thy pleasure than the choice of the brethren, the wishes of the people, or the consent of the prelates and favour of the nobles, though none of these was wanting. Behold, new people fill the land, a new king is on the throne, a new primate, and new laws. They accuse thee of error in having commanded, and me of presumption in having obeyed. To thee, therefore, I resign the charge which I never sought: thou, who art now with God, canst best tell whether in committing it to me thou wast deceived." So saying, he laid his crosier upon the tomb, and took his seat as a simple monk among the monks. This solemn appeal from a grave and venerable man moved the consciences of those who heard it. Lanfranc was struck by it; he persuaded William to allow him to retain his see, and continued the firm friend of Wulfstan ever after.[4]

Wulfstan was a great admirer of the Venerable Bede, and had dedicated a church to his name in the beginning of his ministry as bishop. On the occasion of his dedicating a church he used always to preach; and great crowds flocked to hear his preaching; and no wonder, for he took that way of preaching which must always command hearers. He so managed his text, that he always spoke of Christ, always set Christ as it were in view of those who listened to his words, nay, he brought in Christ, when the mention of his name might seem almost cross to his matter. He was a favourer of monasteries, encouraging Alwin, a monk or hermit, to build one at Great Malvern; the fine church of which foundation, though the building is of a later age, still remains. This monastery arose at that time on the site of a hermitage in the wild forest which surrounded

[4] The miracle, which is commonly appended to this story must be left out of present consideration.

it on every side. He also rebuilt the cathedral church at Worcester. On the day that he began this work, he was observed by one of his monks standing in silent sadness in a corner of the churchyard, groaning inwardly. The monk modestly expostulated with him: "Surely," he said, "you ought rather to rejoice that such things can be done for your church in your time; that buildings are now erected in a style of beauty and splendour unknown to our fathers." "I judge differently," said Wulfstan; "we are pulling down the labours of holy men, that we may gain honour and reputation to ourselves. The good old time was, when men knew not how to build magnificent piles, but thought any roof good enough, if under it they could offer themselves a willing sacrifice to God. It is a miserable change, if we neglect the souls of men, and pile together stones." These words were only too prophetic.

It is said that in Wulfstan's time the practice of selling men and women for slaves was still secretly kept up by some traders at Bristol, who carried them over into Ireland. The laws of the Conqueror forbade this, as it had before been forbidden by Alfred and the earliest Christian monarchs; but neither the fear of the king nor the love of God was strong enough to break off the iniquitous traffic. The good man was bitterly grieved at it; and paying more than one visit to Bristol, he stayed there two or three months at a time, preaching every Sunday, and labouring to turn their hearts to mercy and brotherly love. The effect of these pastoral admonitions was something beyond what he had expected. The practice was not only abolished, but public opinion was strongly aroused against the slave-dealers. And when, a few years afterwards, one viler than the rest attempted to revive the trade, the people rose in tumult,

led him out of the city, and inflicted such wounds on his face and eyes, that he was blind ever after.

Wulfstan was a mild and affectionate counsellor in cases of conscience, making friends of all who chose him for their confessor. His charity to the poor was most abundant; his purse was their treasury. His devotion was much moved by the sight of beauty in childhood: "What must be the fair beauty of the Creator," he said, "whose creatures are made so fair!" He divided his hours carefully, so that every day he found time for devotional reading and prayer, often in company with the younger clergy who were part of his household, and sometimes alone. Whether he was walking or sitting, says one who wrote his life, whether he rose up or lay down, the psalm was ever on his lips, and Christ always in his thoughts. He died at the advanced age of eighty-eight, A.D. 1095.

Among the writings of the early English Church is a sermon in the Saxon or ancient English language, which is thought to be bishop Wulfstan's. It is an excellent plain discourse on the Catholic faith, explaining Scripture mysteries in an easy familiar style; as may be seen by the following example, where he speaks of the generation or begetting of the blessed Son of God:

"The Son is not wrought or shapen, but begotten; and yet he is alike old and alike everlasting with his Father. His begetting is not as our begetting. When a man begetteth a son, and his child is born, the father is greater and the son is less; and while the son waxeth, the father groweth old. Wherefore thou findest not among men father and son to be equal or alike. But I will give thee an example how thou mayest understand God's begetting. Fire begets of itself brightness; and the brightness is alike old with the fire: the fire is not of the brightness,

but the brightness is of the fire: the fire begets the brightness, and is never without its brightness. As then thou hearest that the brightness is all as old as the fire that it cometh of, so grant that God may beget a Son as old and as everlasting as himself."

Another Saxon who retained the favour of William was Ingulf, abbot of Croyland. He had served the Conqueror as a private secretary at his court in Normandy during the reign of Edward, and was thus enabled to provide for his own safety, and to do some good to his suffering countrymen. He was by birth a Londoner. His history of his own abbey is one of the most valuable records of the age of the Conquest.

Turgot, a native of Lincolnshire, another historian of this time, was a Saxon of good family; and in his youth, after the Normans had gained possession of England, was kept, with other youths, as a hostage in Lincoln castle for the peace of that part of the country. Hence he contrived to escape to Grimsby, and took ship to the coast of Norway, where he got an introduction to the king's court, taught sacred learning and psalmody to the Danes, and made some stay in that country. Then returning to England, he became a monk at Durham, prior of the society there, and at length bishop of the see of St. Andrews, in Scotland, erected by king Malcolm III. as the primate's see, A.D. 1108, but for that time and long after subject to the archbishops of York.

We must now take a short view of the effect of these changes upon the English Church. In the first place, they went far to deprive the people of a native ministry. For nearly one hundred years after the Conquest, not a single Saxon was promoted to any bishopric or other eminent place in the Church. These places were filled by Normans or foreigners, few of whom could speak a word of English; so that Thomas, the first Norman archbishop of York, re-

quested Wulfstan to visit his churches for him, fearing the dislike of the people, whose language was unknown to him; and it was nearly a full century after the death of Wulfstan before they heard another sermon from a bishop which they could understand. The only preachers, except where a Saxon landlord was left here and there, who might promote a countryman to a village-church, were the poor Saxon monks, who sometimes followed the good example of St. Cuthbert, and wandered over the moors to the villages which lay within a short distance of their monasteries. After the wide-wasting war and famine of bread, followed another famine of hearing the word of the Lord. And whereas, in the time of Aldhelm and Alfred and Elfric, the people had been accustomed to hear the Apostles' creed, the Lord's prayer, and the Psalms, in their own language, all was now locked up in Latin, and the whole public service became to them only a show and a sound.

Another evil was, that the greater proportion of the Normans, whom their kings sought to advance, had more of the temper of military chiefs or barons than of bishops. There were many Saxon bishops and abbots who died in battle during the Danish invasions; but war was not a part of their profession; it was undertaken in the extremity of their country's danger against pagan enemies, to give their defence something of a sacred character. When the old English chronicler speaks of one who died fighting against the Welch, he says, as if it were something very different, "he wore his knapsack in his priesthood, until he was made a bishop. After his bishophood he abandoned his chrism and his cross, his ghostly weapons, and took to his spear and to his sword, and so marched against Griffith the Welch king. But he was there slain, and his priests with

him." The Normans, on the contrary, were as often in the field as in council; and not only partook in the civil business and political parties, but led their troops to battle, fortified castles, and governed as the king's lieutenants in provinces, or took the administration of the whole realm. It was a bad sign when Robert of Jumieges held the first bishop's castle in England. Odo, bishop of Bayeux, brother-in-law of the Conqueror, was a great warrior. Ranulph Flambard, made by William Rufus bishop of Durham, after having filled the office of treasurer or procurator of taxes, went to build castles and plot treasons in the north. Roger, bishop of Old Sarum in the reign of Henry I., his nephew Alexander bishop of Lincoln, and Henry of Blois bishop of Winchester and brother of king Stephen, built and held an enormous number of castles. It is plain that if the Norman kings had continued, without a check, to fill the Church with such bishops, the sees would have been occupied by cunning lawyers, plotting statesmen, or bluff swordsmen, instead of ministers of truth and peace.

The union of offices so ill assorted was in itself an evil, even where the man was one whose character did not misbecome his profession. The Conqueror having fortified the castle of Durham, after the death of Comyn gave it to the keeping of the new bishop Walcher, whom he made earl of Northumberland and his governor in the north. Walcher was a mild-tempered man, who invited monks from the southern provinces, and began to restore Bede's monastery of Jarrow, Whitby, and other places of ancient name for learning. But he was too gentle for his office of civil governor. There was a Saxon thane or noble, who had been stripped of most of his property, but resided at Durham, and was highly esteemed for his virtues and talents by the people.

The bishop became acquainted with him, and was much guided by his counsel in the government of the province; and nothing could be better contrived to appease the spirits of the Northumbrians, smarting under the cruel oppressions which they had suffered. But there was a vile priest among the retainers of Walcher, who saw with a jealous eye the increasing influence of the Saxon Leolf. The Norman sheriff was equally provoked by it, as it checked his own acts of rapine and extortion. These men, the archdeacon Leobwin and the sheriff Gilbert, caused Leolf to be assassinated. The bishop, who ought to have seen justice done upon the murderers, contented himself by publicly protesting that he was not privy to their crime; and in the mean time they continued to hold their offices, and to pillage, one the property of churches and churchmen, the other of the English freeholders. The Northumbrians meditated revenge. Walcher, accompanied by Gilbert and Leobwin, had gone to Gateshead, one of the most ancient Saxon towns, and the seat of an ancient monastery in the north. Here some of the old inhabitants were to meet him, and counsel was to be taken for preserving the public peace. But hearing that their two enemies were in his company, the people rose in tumult and demanded that they should be surrendered to them. The bishop, with his attendants, retreated into a church, from which he came forth and attempted to speak and pacify the angry multitude, when a voice was heard from the midst of them, "Short rede, good rede (the shortest counsel is the best); slay ye the bishop." The words were scarcely spoken, when a shower of javelins was hurled against him, and he fell, pierced with many wounds. The Northumbrians slew the sheriff by a like death; and as Leobwin would not come out from the church, fired it over his head, and despatched him as he was

discovered half-burnt to death amidst the blazing ruins.

The monasteries had their full share of the miseries of this bitter time. In one of the first years of his reign, William, hearing that many Saxons had placed their treasure in these religious houses, as in a place of safety, ordered them to be generally rifled. His barons often seized upon their lands, and the abbot had sometimes yielded them in hope of retaining peaceably what was left. But nothing was more felt as a grievance than the attempt which was made to change their service-books. A fierce old Norman priest, Thurstan, who had obtained the abbey of Glastonbury, began to command the Saxon monks to lay aside the old order of pope Gregory, which had been in use from the foundation of the English Church, and to adopt a new form composed by William of Fescamp, a monk of Normandy. When they refused, to terrify them into compliance, he brought a body of Norman archers to the door of the abbey-church. The monks attempted to bar the door, and a fray ensued, in which three of them were shot to death and eighteen wounded. It is true that Thurstan was shortly after deprived of his office; and this evil was remedied, when OSMUND, a learned and pious bishop of Old Sarum, A.D. 1078-1099, compiled the Salisbury missal and manual,—a prayer-book in Latin, containing many which still have a place in the English Prayer-book, and which was used in the greatest number of English churches, and in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, to the time of the Reformation.

Nor was the oppression of the Church by any means so grievous in the time of William the Conqueror, as it was in the reign of some of his successors, notwithstanding these outrages. LANFRANC, who was now placed at the head of it, was a man of

wisdom and prudence, who had skill enough to restrain some of the outbreaks of his imperious master, and to check the encroachments of his barons. Lanfranc was a native of Pavia in the north of Italy; and being left an orphan at an early age, took to the profession of teaching for his support. The schoolmasters of those times were a wandering race, who often shifted from one city to another, as the chances of assembling scholars were more promising. He taught with some reputation in Italy and in France, and at Avranches in Normandy; when, hearing that another countryman of his was founding the abbey of Bec near Rouen, he determined to become a monk under him. He was afterwards prior of this monastery; from which came several of the early Norman archbishops of Canterbury. Here his learning and talents recommended him to the notice of William, who in a short time made him his chief counsellor. But this friendship was soon interrupted. William was desirous of marrying a daughter of a count of Flanders, who was too near a cousin to be approved as a match for him by the churchmen of that age. Lanfranc opposed it. The fiery duke banished him his court, and shortly after from his dominions; and suiting his action to the word, to shew that he meant to make Normandy too hot to hold him, burnt a village belonging to the abbey. Lanfranc set out on his journey, riding a lame horse, the best the monks could furnish him with, but which at every step lowered its head almost to the ground. Thus ill-equipped for speed, he met his master going to the chase: "I wish," said he, "to obey your mandate; but I see I must leave your dominions on foot, unless you will have compassion and furnish me with a better horse." William, like other angry men, was softened by a harmless jest: "Who ever heard," said he, "of a culprit asking his judge to make him

a present?" In short, he gave him a hearing, and restored him to a favour and influence which he never lost. The burnt village was rebuilt, and the abbey enriched with new grants.

William had discernment enough to perceive the advantage his government had derived in Normandy from the counsels of Lanfranc. He had promoted him to the abbey of Caen, and had offered him the archbishopric of Rouen. He had gone on several embassies about the affairs of the Norman Church to Rome; for the ties between that Church and the pope were much closer before the Conquest than those of the Church of England. In these embassies Lanfranc had conducted himself with strict loyalty towards his master; and this virtue he eminently displayed when he was placed at Canterbury. He was entrusted with the administration of the kingdom while William was absent on a visit to Normandy; and his promptitude in sending information of the conspiracy of the earls of Norwich and Hereford greatly contributed to the putting down of that dangerous attempt. He continued after the Conqueror's death to support the cause of Rufus, whom he considered to have the title of his father's will; and this king is said to have owed most of his security to the firmness of Lanfranc and Wulfstan.

As a churchman, he did not omit to do what seemed requisite for the good government of his own province. He procured first a restoration of the property which the foreign barons had seized, citing the Conqueror's half-brother Odo, bishop of Bayeux, whom he had made earl of Kent, to give back the lands of the church of Canterbury, and gaining the king's order for a general restitution. He took some pains to see that the clergy were every where furnished with correct copies of the service-books. He then rebuilt the cathedral-church

of Canterbury, procuring for that purpose stone from beyond sea from the quarries near Caen in Normandy, where he had resided. The western tower of this cathedral, as it was built by Lanfranc, was standing only a few years since, the rest having been destroyed by fire about a hundred years after his time. When the clergy of the cathedral of Canterbury lately found it necessary to rebuild this also, they followed Lanfranc's example, and brought over their stone from Caen. He placed his friend Gundulph, a monk of the abbey of Bec, in the see of Rochester, who was a man of excellent character for wisdom and charity; and he appointed Paul, a monk of Caen, to the abbey of St. Alban's, which this abbot rebuilt in a style of magnificence hitherto unknown in England.

Lanfranc was a man of great liberality, and a kind patron of the distressed. He founded two hospitals or almshouses near the city of Canterbury, and endowed them with a yearly income for their support. And he made the same provision which we have seen made by archbishop Wulfred for the yearly maintenance of a certain number of helpless poor from his manors. His preference for monkhood was shewn in a new collection of rules which he drew up for the Benedictine monasteries, which we shall have occasion shortly to refer to. What was worse, he began the attempt, which was afterwards repeated by Anselm, of enforcing single life upon all the clergy. This was done in compliance with pope Hildebrand, or Gregory VII., who had succeeded to the pontificate shortly after the Conquest, A.D. 1074, and is the great founder of what is properly called popery; who had issued his commands that all priests should either quit their livings or their wives. He was also the first teacher in this country who maintained the doctrine of transub

stantiation. He was led into it by a dispute in Italy with a French clergyman called Berenger, archdeacon of Angers, and a teacher of eminent learning, who seems to have held the true primitive doctrine, "that the holy bread on the altar is the body of Christ, but that it is still bread after consecration." On the contrary, Lanfranc says, "I believe that the earthly substances, which are consecrated on the Lord's table by the ministry of the priests, are in an unspeakable, incomprehensible, and wonderful manner, by power from above, turned into the substance of the Lord's body, though the appearances of the things themselves, and some other qualities, remain; and though the Lord's body itself is in heaven at the right hand of the Father, remaining immortal, whole, unbroken, and unhurt: so that it may be truly said that we receive the same body which he took from the Virgin, and yet not the same; the same as to its substance, and proper nature, and virtue, but not the same if regarded as to the appearance of bread and wine." It is a pity he did not see that a true declaration of Christian faith does not lie in reconciling contradictions; that though we find in Scripture much that is above our reason, we are not required to believe what is contrary to it. He did not, however, press this belief as an article of faith upon the Church; and both he and his successor Anselm spoke with caution and reverence on the subject. "It is a safe way," says Lanfranc, "to believe a mystery of faith; curiously to question about it is unprofitable."

One remarkable change was brought in, perhaps in consequence of this new doctrine. The communion-tables in the Saxon churches were almost always made of wood; they were now taken down, and stone tables or altars generally set up.[1] It was most likely

[1] Malmsbury, Life of Wulfstan. It has been objected to this statement, that Bede speaks of a stone altar (ii. § 14), and

with a knowledge of this fact, that bishop Ridley at the Reformation ordered the wooden tables to be restored. The restoration would have been unnecessary, had not the sacrifice of the mass made so great an abuse of the stone altars. As it was, it was well to return to the more general ancient practice of the early English Church.

that in archbishop Egbert's collection of canons there is one forbidding any form of consecration to be used over altars not made of stone. But the passage in Bede seems to prove that stone was not the common material; and the canon referred to was not passed by the Saxon Church, but copied by Egbert, among many from different sources, from one enacted at the synod of Epone in France, A.D. 509. In the primitive Church either material was used indifferently, as St. Athanasius bears witness. Nor is there any reason why either may not be used now. But the case was different when the Norman bishops destroyed the wooden altars, and introduced a new doctrine together with the use of stone.

CHAPTER XVI.

REIGNS OF RUFUS, HENRY I., AND STEPHEN. ARCHBISHOP ANSELM AND QUEEN MATILDA. BEGINNING OF POPERY IN ENGLAND. OPPRESSION OF NORMAN BARONS. DEATH OF THURSTAN.

> So pass'd we with slow steps through that sad realm
> Of storm and spirits foul; and, as we pass'd,
> Still touch'd a little on THE LIFE TO COME.
>
> DANTE.

HAD the nations of Europe been governed by wise and generous sovereigns, who sought to reign in the love and loyal affections of their people, or had the people been in the secure enjoyment of their liberty and property, such a power as that of the Roman popes could never have arisen. Still less would it have found abettors in the friends of religion and virtue, and those whose desire was to restore the cause of justice and equal laws. But when this new dominion arose, the world was out of joint; might was exalted against right: warlike lords established an iron rule by force of arms, and gave the subject people to be the prey of their military chiefs, whose castles were turned into prisons and houses of torture to all who refused to do their bidding or submit to their exactions. To those who were groaning under this heavy yoke, the name of

the good father of Christendom came as the signal of deliverance, the watchword of liberty, the refuge in distress. It was the name of the only power on earth that was able to check the course of wrong and robbery, to provide a place of shelter for suffering innocence, to bow down the neck of pride.

This was the secret of the power of the popes, which never prevailed in England but when the rulers were tyrannical and licentious, and was successfully withstood and controlled when laws were well administered, and when there was prudence and stedfastness in the counsels of the state. But when pope Hildebrand began his encroachments on the power of kings, there was great need that there should be some one, who like him should proclaim himself the assertor of justice, the reformer of morals, and restorer of religion. That which other proud bishops of Rome had before attempted in vain, he and his successors easily accomplished; for the Church, which early Christian princes had cherished and protected, was now treated as a captive or a slave, pillaged and spoiled, or turned to a means of provision for worthless favourites, who wasted in thriftless luxury the portion given them for the service of God.

After the death of Lanfranc, the see of Canterbury was left to the disposal of William Rufus, who kept it open for four years, while he plundered its revenues. Other bishoprics, abbeys, and priories, as they fell vacant, he took in the same way into his own hands. How long this would have continued is uncertain, had not a fit of sickness alarmed his conscience. Anselm, abbot of Bec, happened at this time to be in England, on a visit to a Norman baron. He was mentioned to Rufus as a fit man for the primacy, acceptable to the clergy, to whom he was known from his intimacy with Lan-

franc, and one who had been in high esteem with the king his father. Anselm was sent for; but undertook the office with great unwillingness, saying to those who persuaded him to it, "It is like yoking a poor old sheep to the same plough with a young untamed bull." And so it proved. The king recovered, and became a sincere penitent in a wrong sense; he repented earnestly that he had given up the archbishopric and other sees, and desired Anselm to furnish him with a thousand pounds. Anselm honestly refused; and lost his favour for ever. He was made to suffer as many grievances as could well be inflicted, without direct violence to his person. He was attacked with groundless lawsuits, his friends were imprisoned or banished without the pretence of justice; and at length he retired to France, whence he proceeded shortly to Rome.

It is nothing surprising if such injustice made Anselm more earnestly bent upon providing for the Church that succour and means of defence, which his Italian education had taught him to consider as appointed for this end. This excellent man, for such he was, became the means of gaining to the popes the right of *investiture*, the ceremony of delivering a ring and crosier, or pastoral staff, to a bishop or mitred abbot, on his succeeding to his preferment. The kings of the countries in Western Europe had enjoyed this right, till Gregory VII., in the first year of his popedom, had claimed it for the see of St. Peter, and forbade sovereigns to exercise it under pain of excommunication. But this decree had no effect in England, till Anselm obtained the right for pope Pascal II., after a long contest with Henry I. It seems to us at this day astonishing how the kings, whose power was in other respects almost absolute, should have been obliged to yield to a claim of this kind, which took out of their

hands in a great measure the power of giving away the preferment of the Church, or of keeping their due influence over it. But tyranny is weak: their own abuse of their power had prepared the way for the loss of it. The cause of the Church's independence was felt, as it will ever be in the like hazard, to be the cause of righteousness and truth, and the favour of the people attended it. As Anselm came out from one of his interviews with Rufus, a common soldier stepped forward from the ranks of the king's guard: "Be comforted, good father," he said; "your children pray for you. Remember, while you suffer these humiliations, how Job on the dunghill gave Satan the foil, which Adam could not give in paradise." When he went down to the coast, to take his last journey to Rome in the reign of Henry, he was attended by crowds, not only of clergymen, but of the citizens of Canterbury and country-people, who prayed for his success and safe return.

How could it be otherwise? The whole country, saving the portion of the Church, where that was left unimpaired, had been portioned out to no more than about seven hundred foreigners, too powerful for subjects, and often raising conspiracies and wars against their king, and who had no way of securing their own safety from the provoked commoners, but by going every where armed and attended, executing military law on a country that was at peace.[1] The king, having little help from them, and often not daring to enforce obedience on such refractory spirits, sought to supply his extravagance or need by the spoil of the unresisting.

[1] Godfrey, bishop of Coutances, one of the Conqueror's chief counsellors, held more than two hundred and fifty manors, principally in Somerset and Devon. Ivo Talbois, about one hundred in Lincolnshire only. Odo, bishop of Bayeux, and the countess Judith his niece, William Peverel, William de Warenne, and others, had equal or still larger grants.

Even Henry I., though justly reported as one of the mildest and most accomplished of the early Norman kings, followed with the Church the plan pursued by Rufus. His preferments were sold for money: and the clergy were taxed, as by others of his successors, to a large proportion of the yearly amount of their livings. On his first coming to the crown, he recalled Anselm from the banishment into which he had been driven by his brother; but the proceedings of the archbishop in a council held at London, A.D. 1103, where he deprived several abbots who had bought their offices, gave him an alarm. On Anselm's refusing to consecrate a bishop whom he had appointed, he first agreed that each should appeal to the pope; but when the sentence was given against him, he directed his minister to tell the archbishop, that he would not receive him again into the kingdom without submission. Anselm was then on his return from Rome, and on receiving this message remained at Lyons; while for a year and four months Henry seized on the lands of Canterbury, and converted all to his own use, in defiance of his plighted word.

Before the Conquest, the bishops, after being elected by the clergy, were approved by the Witenagemot, where the bishops, some of the abbots, earls, and king's thanes, sat together. But in reality the appointment belonged to the Church.[2] At first, the bishops of the province elected; after Dunstan's time,

[2] King Wihtred of Kent, A.D. 694, gave this law for the election of bishops: "When it happens that a bishop dies, let it be made known to the archbishop, and let such a one as is worthy be chosen with his advice and consent. And let the archbishop make inquiry into his character; and let no man be chosen or consecrated to so holy an office but with the archbishop's advice. Kings ought to appoint earls and sheriffs and doomsmen (judges); and the archbishop ought to teach and govern God's Church, and to choose and appoint bishops."

the monks or clergy of the vacant cathedral often claimed it. There are very few instances, and those chiefly in the time of Edward the Confessor, when their election was set aside. At the same time, the wishes of a wise or powerful sovereign often influenced the election, but by no means controlled it; for it was the common preamble to their laws, that the Church should be free.

William the Conqueror, notwithstanding the wrongs done at the beginning of his reign to the Saxon bishops, yet respected this liberty; and after he had gained the primacy for Lanfranc, was chiefly guided by his counsel in all that concerned the Church. On the other hand, Lanfranc was in no haste to admit pope Hildebrand's claim to the investiture; so far from it, that he did not presume, without the consent of his master, to acknowledge him for pope. In A.D. 1080, the German emperor Henry IV., with a large party of his own bishops, having set up an archbishop of Ravenna against Hildebrand, with the title of Clement III., cardinal Hugo, one of the emperor's ministers, wrote to Lanfranc in behalf of this anti-pope. His answer was wise and cautious, and shews how far he was from wishing to surrender the liberty of the English Church to Rome, while the rights of the Church were secured by the protection of the king:

"I have received your letter," he says, "and read it; but some part of it has not satisfied me. I do not approve of your calling pope Gregory Hildebrand, or the abuse you give him, or your speaking of his legates as little thorns in your side. You speak very much in praise of Clement, and in my opinion too much; for we are not to praise a man without reserve till death has sealed his character, and even then we know little, and cannot tell with certainty what he is, or how he may appear in the

sight of God. I believe, however, that the emperor has not ventured on so bold a step without reason, and has not prospered so far without great help from God. I cannot advise you to come into England, unless you first receive the king of England's leave. For our island has not yet refused the first-elected pope, nor published any resolution whether we are to obey the last. When the cause has been heard on both sides, we shall be able to see more clearly what ought to be done." William continued to acknowledge Gregory.

Henry I., on coming to the throne, had issued a charter promising full amendment of the grievances inflicted by Rufus; who left at his death the archbishopric of Canterbury, the bishoprics of Winchester and Salisbury, and eleven abbeys, all let to farm. "I promise," the words of this charter run, "that I will neither sell nor let to farm, nor on the death of any archbishop, bishop, or abbot, take any fee from the domain of his church, or from his tenants, till his successor enters upon it. In reverence to God, and out of the love I have to all my subjects, I make God's holy Church free." After this promise, besides treating the property of Canterbury as has just been mentioned, in the following year having gained possession of Normandy, and his fears and respect for the English being removed, he gave up the country almost to the license of military plunder. "It is not easy to describe," says the old English chronicler,[3] "the misery which the land was now suffering through various and manifold unright. Fines and impositions never ceased; and wheresoever the king went, there was harrowing without check allowed to all his servants upon the wretched people: and with it often was joined burn-

[3] Sax. Chron. A.D. 1104.

ing of houses and manslaughter. All was done that could provoke the anger of God and vex the miserable nation." "You might see," says another who lived at the time,[4] "those who had nothing to give to the exactors, driven out of their little homes; or their houses, the doors torn off the hinges and carried away, offered to public pillage." This was done in the land where the old Saxon law had made every man's house his castle. As to the clergy, "every parish-church was put under a fine, and the parson was to pay a ransom for his liberty." About two hundred parish-priests, clothed in surplices and barefoot, as if they had been doing penance or on a pilgrimage, went in a body to wait at the king's palace-door in London, and entreat his mercy; but with no success. Such was the scene in one year of the reign of this most gentle of the Norman Conqueror's sons; who yet is acknowledged to have maintained much authority for the laws, and left behind him the character of a king who protected the property and lives of his subjects, and made misdoers afraid of his vengeance.

There is one name in his reign deserving mention in the Christian history of old England, and it is the name of one to whom probably the king owed the few redeeming qualities he seems to have possessed. This was his queen MATILDA, the niece of Edgar Atheling, and daughter of Malcolm king of Scotland. His marriage with her at his accession to the throne went far to reconcile the English to a sovereign who thus restored what they thought "the right royal race of England." She had been educated in a nunnery; such religious houses being at this period the only places of education, as well as the best places of security, for the modest innocence

[4] Eadmer.

QUEEN MATILDA.

even of young women of the highest rank. Many who had taken such refuge in the Conqueror's reign were afterwards restored to their friends by the mediation of Lanfranc. When she became queen, she did not forget the lessons of piety and mercy she had received there; she was the advocate with her husband for the oppressed, and she had a warm and affectionate veneration for the character of Anselm. She was frequently in correspondence with the aged prelate both before and during this second banishment; and at length she seems to have persuaded Henry to restore a man whose presence was so necessary to the prosperity of his government.

"I look for your return," she says in one of her

letters to him,[5] "as a daughter for the return of her father, as a handmaiden for her lord and master, as a sheep for the shepherd's care. And I am encouraged to expect it by the confidence I have in good men's prayers, and the good will which, after close examination, I am persuaded the king my husband feels towards you. His mind is not so provoked against you as some men think; and by God's good will, with my suggestions, which shall not be wanting, he will become more disposed to concord. He now allows you to receive a portion of the income of your estates; hereafter he will allow you a larger portion, if you will make your request to him seasonably. And though in this he acts rather as one who has the power in his hands than as an equitable judge, yet I do beseech you, in the abundance of your compassionate spirit, lay aside all rancour of human bitterness, which is not natural to you, and turn not from him the gentleness of love. Nay, rather be a kind intercessor with God both for him and me, and our little ones, and the prosperity of our kingdom."

She had heard on another occasion, while Anselm was in England, that he was injuring his health by practising a kind of daily fast, having no regular table served, and only taking food as his servants chanced to bring it, when they thought he must be almost famished: "I know," she says, "that many examples in Scripture encourage you to practise fasting; your constant reading of the Bible tells you frequently, how Elijah was fed by the raven, Elisha by the widow, and how Daniel was supported. No doubt you have also read in your Gentile learning of the frugal fare of Socrates, and Pythagoras, and Antisthenes, and other philosophers, whom it is un-

[5] Among Anselm's epistles.

necessary, and would take me too long, to mention. Let me come, then, to the times of grace and the new law. Christ Jesus, who consecrated the practice of fasting, consecrated the use of eating also, by going to the marriage-feast, where he turned water into wine; by going to the feast at Simon's house, where he fed with spiritual food the woman whom he had delivered from seven devils; and not refusing to dine with Zaccheus, whom he called from the power of the service of this world to a heavenly service. Remember the advice of St. Paul to Timothy, 'Drink no longer water;' he bids him to leave off his fasting diet; and whereas he had drank nothing but water before, he now tells his best-beloved disciple, 'Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thy often infirmities.' Follow the example of good pope Gregory, who relieved faintness and weakness of stomach by taking comforting food and wine, that he might manfully quit himself as a preacher of God's word. Do what he did, as you hope to come to His presence before whom he now stands, to Christ Jesus, the fountain of life and rock of salvation. Pray for me, holy father, as for a handmaid of yours, who loves you with all the affection of her heart: and as this letter is not the expression of a pretended kindness, but is sent in a spirit of faithful and firm charity, vouchsafe to receive it, to read it, to hear my petition, and comply with my request."

It is impossible to read such a letter, and not to feel that the spirit of Christian kindness is the same in all ages. No doubt this excellent woman, whose education seems to have been something more learned than one would perhaps expect in the dark ages, was not without a kindly influence in the court in which she presided, and her example tended to preserve religion in honour. She died before her husband; having been the founder of a house for Augustin

Canons, a new religious order which then was lately come into England, and a hospital for poor incurables, both near London. Anselm was dead many years before. The king, who was a man of profligate private life, again kept the see of Canterbury void for five years, and then appointed a poor infirm monk of Caen to it, who resided chiefly in a sick-chamber, admitted no Englishman to his presence, and gave all his preferments to Normans. This old monk, Ralph of Seez in Normandy, was succeeded by William of Corboil, a French priest, born near Paris, who was the instrument by whom the popes gained a more lasting dominion over the independence of the English Church.

It is right to make a strong distinction between such men as Anselm, and those less praiseworthy prelates, who were led by worse motives to exalt the power of the popes. Anselm desired only the Church's liberty. He was born in a country where all gave the bishop of Rome primacy and honour, and he thought the same was his due in England. But he did not mean to grant him more than this. "The Church is yours," he said to king Rufus, "to defend and guard it as a patron: it is not yours to invade its rights and lay it waste. It is the property of God, that his ministers may live of it, not that your armies and wars should be supported from it." And again, in a letter to Baldwin, second king of Jerusalem, which kingdom had been founded by the crusaders while Anselm was primate: "It is of the greatest importance," he says to him, "how, in this revival of the Church of Palestine, you provide for its establishment; for such as you make it, it is likely to remain to future generations. Think not, then, as many bad princes do, that the Church of God is given to serve you as a vassal serves his lord; but that it is intrusted to you as a patron and defender. *There*

is nothing in this world more dear to God than the liberty of his Church. They who desire not so much to advance her cause as to exercise dominion over her, without doubt are striving against God. Our Lord would have his bride a free woman, not a bondmaid. They who pay her the honour due to a mother are indeed her children and God's children. They who tyrannise over her, as subdued to them, make themselves not sons but strangers, and will therefore be justly disinherited from her promised inheritance and portion."

William of Corboil had been prior of St. Osith's in Essex, a new religious house of Augustin Canons, who being an order of priests, and not monks, his appointment was unpopular with the monks, they having supplied the see of Canterbury and most other sees with bishops ever since the time of Dunstan. To fortify himself against their dislike, the year after he came to the primate's office he procured a bull from Rome appointing him pope's legate in ordinary; which was as much as to acknowledge that all the power or authority he was to exercise must come from the pope's commission. Up to this time the pope had no jurisdiction in England. Anselm had acknowledged him as the head bishop in the Christian Church, and in virtue of this eminence wished him to have the investiture of the archbishops, but not to interfere with elections of prelates, or to give laws to the Church of England. The Church was under a head of its own, governed by the king in temporal matters, and by the archbishop of Canterbury in spiritual. William of Corboil made the primacy of England consist in acting as the pope's deputy. This will be seen from a copy of the bull (which follows) from pope Honorius II. It may serve as a common specimen of these singular epistles.

"Honorius the bishop, servant of the servants

of God, to my beloved brethren the bishops, abbots, barons, and all other clergymen and laymen in England and Scotland, health and the apostolic benediction. The holy Church, the bride of Christ, rooted on the foundation of the Apostles' faith, as a devoted and kind mother, is accustomed to minister to her mild and humble children far and near the food of life. Those that are near are visited by our personal presence; those who are distant by the ministry of our legates. Since, therefore, we know that you will be as the dutiful and loving sons of St. Peter, we have entrusted to our very dear brother, William archbishop of Canterbury, the office of our vicar in England and Scotland; that, appointed there by us the legate of the apostolic see, relying on the help of your charity, he may amend what needs amendment, and confirm what needs confirmation, to the honour of God and the holy Roman Church, and the health of your souls. Wherefore we command and instruct your whole body, that you, one and all, shew him humble obedience as our legate, and unanimously meet at his bidding, and hold councils with him for the welfare of the Church and advancement of the Christian religion. Given at our Lateran Palace, Jan. 25, 1125."

The French archbishop, who thus betrayed the liberty of the English Church, soon found reason to repent of his folly. In the same year the same pope sent his cardinal, John of Crema, an Italian priest, as legate extraordinary into England. The cardinal called a council to meet in London; where, as the legate extraordinary ranked above the legate in ordinary, the Italian priest sat on a higher seat than the archbishop, that all might see how low the humility of the poor primate had brought him. A few years afterwards, A.D. 1131, another pope, Innocent II., took away the legate's office from him altogether, to

give it to a warlike young bishop of royal blood, Henry of Blois, a grandson of the Conqueror and brother of king Stephen, whom Henry I. had just appointed to the see of Winchester. And though the next archbishop, Theobald, abbot of Bec, recovered it for his primacy, it was with much difficulty, and not without paying an enormous sum of money, that the following archbishops gained the privilege of being considered the pope's legates in virtue of their office. But this did not prevent the Roman pontiffs from sending their legates extraordinary from time to time into the country, who when they came superseded the archbishops, and held councils, passed laws for the Church, and extorted enormous taxes from the clergy in later times for the needs of their foreign master. Thus was the independence of the English Church lost by the folly of one French priest; and it cost a struggle of full four hundred years, till in the Reformation its freedom was restored.

It may perhaps be thought that at this time the whole Church and nation were in such haste to establish popery, that they were all ready and glad to take this leap in the dark. Far from it. The writers of the time never speak of William of Corboil without expressing contempt for his meanness; and his name became a standing jest in merry old England. "He ought not to be called William of Curboil," says John Bromton, abbot of Jorval, "but William of Turmoil." "Truly I would speak his praises, if I could," says Henry, archdeacon of Huntingdon; "but they are beyond expression, for no man has yet discovered them."

The popes, however, did not immediately think of making the archbishops. In the troubles of Stephen's reign the Norman bishops elected Theobald, a man of some ability and prudence. He took no part unbecoming a Christian bishop in that time of public

confusion; but while Henry of Blois, Roger bishop of Salisbury, and other of king Henry's bishops, were holding camps or castles, and busy in state-intrigues, he endeavoured to be quiet and do his own business, encouraging the native talent of Englishmen; and at length, after a long and miserable civil strife, he was the means of making peace between Stephen and the young prince Henry, who shortly succeeded as Henry II. to the crown.

Stephen himself was a singular character among usurpers; mild, and good natured, and easy, without one kingly virtue, it seems to have been a strange freak of ambition which tempted him to seize upon the crown. It is among the other bad merits of William of Corboil, that he was the person who placed it on his head, and thus gave him all the authority which that sacred ceremony could confer. But the barons, who had sworn to be his subjects, sought only liberty for their own oppressions. Every noble became the tyrant on his own domain, ruled in it as if he had been the king, and with greater ferocity, as his needs and danger were the more pressing and constant. No fewer than twelve hundred castles were built and fortified during these nineteen years; "and when the castles were made," says the old chronicler,[6] "they filled them with devils and evil men. They took those whom they supposed to have any goods, both by night and by day, labouring men and women, and threw them into prison for their gold and silver; and never were any martyrs so tortured as they were. Some they hanged up by the feet, and smoked them with foul smoke; and some by the thumbs or by the head, and hung coats of mail for weights on their feet. They tied knotted strings about their heads, and twisted them, till the pain went to the brains. They put them into dun-

[6] Sax. Chron. A.D. 1137.

geons wherein were adders, snakes, and toads; and so destroyed them." These and other horrid cruelties he describes; and the destruction of life which ensued by war, by torture, and by famine. "Never," he says, "did the heathen Danes do worse than they did; for after a time they spared neither church nor churchyard, but took all the goods that were therein, and then burnt church and all together. They spared neither bishop's land, nor abbot's, nor priest's, but plundered both monks and clerks. Every man robbed his neighbour who could. To till the land was to plough the sea: the earth bare no corn; for the land was all laid waste by such deeds; and men said openly, that Christ slept, and his saints, or such wickedness could not go unpunished."

In this reign of confusion and blood, there is yet one name which cannot be remembered by Englishmen without respect,—the name of THURSTAN, archbishop of York. He had the same notions as Anselm had held about the right of investiture; and having been elected by the clergy, as it appears by the wish of king Henry, whose chaplain he was, he went abroad a few years after, to be invested by pope Calixtus, who in A.D. 1119 was holding a council or synod at Rheims. This act gave great offence to Henry, who banished him for a year or more; but he was afterwards restored, and gained from the pope the privilege that his see should be independent of and equal to that of Canterbury. This was one of many points of contention in those times, and changes were often made. The Irish archbishops were made by pope Eugene III., A.D. 1152; the bishops having before been sent over to Lanfranc and Anselm from Ireland for consecration. The Welch, whose Church was now almost united with the English, wanted the pope to allow the archbishopric of St. David's to remain: but Bernard, chaplain to Adelais, the second queen

of Henry I., having gained possession of that see, submitted to the see of Canterbury, and thus its independence came to an end, about A.D. 1115. York was sometimes subject to Canterbury, and sometimes independent, the popes favouring either, as they liked them best: Canterbury, however, at length prevailed. These contests of Norman pride helped on the pope's usurpations. Thurstan himself was a compound of the Norman baron with the Christian bishop; and his character may serve as a specimen of many of the great churchmen of his days; but there were in him great and good qualities mixed with the darkness and the superstition of his time. When he was fixed in his exalted station, he was remarkable for the strictness of his life and the firm uprightness of his conduct. His mode of living was frugal, and yet as generous as became a bishop, who ought to be given to hospitality.[7] He was abundant in alms-deeds, and instant in prayer. In the celebration of the holy communion he was often moved to tears. He promoted men of good life and learning; was gentle to the obedient, and unbending, though without harshness, to the opponents of good discipline. He was as severe to himself as to others; and was remarked for the severity of his penances, going on fast-days attired in sackcloth, and, what now was a common practice, afflicting his body with the scourge.

He had attained an advanced age, when, in the third year of Stephen's reign, A.D. 1138, David, king of Scotland, having declared in favour of his niece, the empress Matilda, collected his forces, and made a dreadful inroad into the northern counties, turning his pretext of opposing a usurper into a plea for plundering and massacring the inhabitants of the country at peace with him. There was neither council nor conduct among the barons of the north: some who

[7] 1 Tim. iii. 2.

dwelt nearest to the border had joined the invading army, that they might partake the spoils, when Thurstan invited the rest to a conference for the defence of the country. He represented to them the disgrace that was brought upon the realm of the Norman conquerors, if they, who had overcome a people often victorious over the Scots, were now to quail before such less worthy antagonists; he shewed them that the nature of the inroad made it no longer a question whether the Scots came as allies of the empress or enemies of England; and that whoever might be the rightful sovereign, it was their duty to protect the soil and the people against such wanton injury and destruction. The barons, Walter l'Espec of Cleveland, Roger Mowbray, William Percy, and other large landed proprietors in Yorkshire, assembled an army, with which they encamped at Northallerton. To impress on the people the conviction that they were to fight, not for a doubtful title, but for the cause of religion, their churches and their homes, there was no royal banner carried to the field; but a tall ship-mast, erected on a waggon, bore a sacred ensign, such as was used in the processions of the Church, representing our Saviour on the cross, pierced with his five wounds. Round this the Norman barons, with their retainers, vowed to stand or fall. Ralph, bishop of Orkney, a suffragan of Thurstan, who was too infirm to come in person, mounted the waggon, and animated the soldiers to fight with the confidence that it was a holy war. The Scots, after a stubborn conflict, were completely routed, and fled in disorder: thus an end was put to the most successful attempt they ever made on the borders, and one which, but for Thurstan's devout energy, would in all probability have given them possession of the whole country north of the Humber.

Within two years after the battle of the standard,

the aged Thurstan felt his vital vigour decay, and prepared for a more solemn hour of conflict.[8] He set his house in order; and assembling the priests of the cathedral of York in his own chapel, made his last confession before them; and lying with bared body on the ground before the altar of St. Andrew, received from some of their hands the discipline of the scourge, with tears bursting from his contrite heart. And remembering a vow made in his youth at Clugny, the famous monastery in Burgundy already mentioned, he went to Pontefract, to a newly founded house of Cluniac monks, followed by an honourable procession of the priests of the church of York, and a great number of laymen. There, on the festival of the conversion of St. Paul, he took the habit of a monk in the regular way, received the abbot's blessing, and for the remainder of his life gave himself entirely to the care of the salvation of his soul. On the 6th of February, A.D. 1140, twenty-six years and six months after his accession to the archbishopric, the canons of the church of York and other religious persons standing round, the hour of his departure being at hand, he celebrated the vigils in commemoration of the dead in Christ, read the lesson himself,[9] and with a clear voice, pausing and sometimes groaning in spirit, chanted the solemn verses of the hymn *Dies iræ:*

Day of wrath! the dreadful day
Shall the banner'd cross display,
Earth in ashes melt away!

Who can paint the agony,
When His coming shall be nigh,
Who shall all things judge and try?

[8] John of Hexham,—in Twysden's Collection, p. 267.

[9] Probably the tenth chapter of the book of Job. The hymn which follows is given in the faithful and striking translation of the Rev. Isaac Williams, of Trinity College, Oxford.

When the trumpet's thrilling tone,
Through the tombs of ages gone,
Summons all before the throne?

Death and time shall stand aghast,
And creation at the blast
Rise to answer for the past:

Then the volume shall be spread,
And the writing shall be read,
Which shall judge the quick and dead.

Then the Judge shall sit; oh, then
All that's hid shall be made plain,
Unrequited nought remain.

Woe is me! what shall I plead?
Who for me shall intercede,
When the righteous scarce is freed?

King of dreadful majesty,
Saving souls in mercy free,
Fount of pity, save thou me!

Weary, seeking me, wast thou,
And for me in death didst bow,—
Let thy pain avail me now!

Thou didst set the adultress free,—
Heardst the thief upon the tree,—
Hope vouchsafing e'en to me.

Nought of thee my prayers can claim,
Save in thy free mercy's name;
Save me from the undying flame!

With thy sheep my place assign,
Separate from the accursed line;
Set me on thy right with thine!

When the lost, to silence driven,
To devouring flames are given,
Call me with the blest to heaven!

Suppliant, lo! to earth I bend,
My bruised heart to ashes rend;
Care thou, Lord, for my last end!

At the close of this solemn service of humiliation he sank to the earth, and while the monks gathered round and prayed for him, breathed his last. The account presents in some respects a painful contrast to the calm piety of Bede's last moments; but it is an affecting picture of the power of a strong faith triumphing amidst the growing superstition of the time. The beautiful Cistercian abbey of Fountains was founded by the charity of this remarkable Christian bishop. He was also founder of the see of Carlisle, A.D. 1133.

CHAPTER XVII.

NORMAN MONASTERIES, AND NEW RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

Prayer was in a barren land, and without food. Our King, whose nature is goodness, moved by Prayer's tears, exclaimed, "Whom shall we send?" Then said Charity, "Here am I, Lord; send me."

ST. BERNARD, *Parable of the Holy War.*

EVERY great and remarkable alterations in the monasteries were consequent on the changes made by the Normans in the English Church. The reader, who has seen in the last two chapters how the frame of society was broken up, and the protection of law taken away from the great bulk of the nation, will be at no loss to conceive why there should at such a time have arisen a strong and widely extended desire, in the minds of peaceable and devout persons, to increase the number of houses consecrated to religion, and places where life and property might still in some measure be secure. But this was not only the case in England; the same causes were at work far and wide among foreign nations; and as there was no other way by which a man could in those days serve God without distraction, or a woman live a virtuous single life, it is no wonder that the number of persons who entered into religious orders was greatly multiplied. At the same time, there were also less praiseworthy motives at work. The kings and nobles thought it a part of

their dignity to found places where they might have a stately tomb and a religious remembrance after death, and where priests might be engaged in a continual service of dirges and prayers, according to the superstitious practice of the time, for their departed spirits. Many of the Norman barons, whose lives were none of the best, found it a cheap way of satisfying their consciences, even if they gave away a few of their best manors, out of the enormous number which they possessed, for the support of a family of monks or nuns. With darker and sterner moods these superstitious feelings took a deeper hue. When king Knute founded his monastery at Essendon, or William the Conqueror his Battle Abbey, was it done, as now sometimes we hear of *Te Deum* being sung after a victory gained in an ill cause, or with some thought of offering an expiation for the slaughter they had made? Was it the pride of conquest, or remorse? Remorse seems to have guided other blood-stained men, like Offa of Mercia, or the vile and cruel king John, when he founded the stately abbey of Beaulieu in Hampshire. Sometimes, too, these foundations arose in the mistaken piety and kindness of a survivor towards a parent or near relative, for whose condition after death his doubtful life made his heir to be concerned: as Shakspeare represents to us Henry V. endowing charities for a memorial of Richard II., whom his father had put to death:

> Five hundred poor I have in daily pay,
> Who twice a day their wither'd hands hold up
> Toward heaven, to pardon blood: and I have built
> Two chantries, where the sad and solemn priests
> Still sing for Richard's soul.

However much of this there may have been, still the darkest day is not all dark. There were many bright gleams of sunshine amidst the prevailing clouds; and

gentleness, goodness, and faith, even among those who made up what the scurrilous John Foxe calls "the rabblement of religious orders."

Of these orders we must now give a short account; and the more, as it must be remembered that as they were in the first century after the Norman conquest, such they continued, with little other change than what arose from their decline in public esteem, to the reign of Henry VIII., their great destroyer.

I. THE BENEDICTINES, the first distinct order, which arose in the western part of Christendon, now received their last reform from the statutes of archbishop Lanfranc, who was, as well as Anselm, a member of this order. His statutes were given at a council in London, A.D. 1075; and must be here briefly noticed. It has been before mentioned that the founder of this sect of monks was Benedict of Nursia in Italy, who flourished about A.D. 530. His rule by degrees became so general in the western Church, that in all the dominions of Charlemagne, when that monarch made inquiry, there was no other to be found. In England we know nothing with certainty of its introduction before the time of Dunstan; and the account we have of the earlier Saxon monasteries makes it appear that they were not so much on the Benedictine as on some more primitive plan.[1] The principal defects in this rule have been mentioned where we spoke of Dunstan; and these defects were never corrected. But it must be confessed, that no sect which ever arose in the

[1] The writer is aware that this is disputed by the learned French Benedictines of St. Maur: but though it may be proved that Bede and Aldhelm had heard of Benedict, and knew who he was, the facts about these monasteries, collected from Saxon authorities, in former chapters, shew that their regulations were different from the Benedictine rule. And this is the opinion of the best English inquirers into antiquity

Church, before the Reformation or since, has done so much for the promotion of good Christian learning as the sect of the Benedictines. And so it continued to the last, till it was almost destroyed in the bloody French Revolution.

The fourth of the rules of St. Benedict was entitled, "The means of doing good works." It has been said that these rules are full of forms, containing little of the spirit of godliness. Yet it may be questioned, whether it would be easy to find a better summary of Christian duties in a short compass than this rule contains:

"In the first place, to love the Lord God with the whole heart, whole soul, whole strength. Then his neighbour as himself. Then not to kill. Then not to commit adultery. Not to steal. Not to covet. Not to bear false witness. To honour all men. And what any one would not have done to him, let him not do to another. To deny himself, that he may follow Christ. To chasten the body. To renounce luxuries. To love fasting. To relieve the poor. To clothe the naked. To visit the sick. To bury the dead. To help in tribulation. To console the afflicted. To disengage himself from worldly affairs. To set the love of Christ before all other things. Not to give way to anger. Not to bear any grudge. Not to harbour deceit in the heart. Not to make false peace. Not to forsake charity. Not to swear, lest haply he perjure himself. To utter truth from his heart and mouth. Not to return evil for evil. Not to do injuries, and to bear them patiently. To love his enemies. Not to curse again those who curse him, but rather to bless them. To endure persecutions for righteousness' sake. Not to be proud. Not given to wine. Not gluttonous. Not addicted to sleep. Not sluggish. Not given to murmur. Not a slanderer. To commit his hope

to God. When he sees any thing good in himself, to attribute it to God, and not to himself. But let him always know that which is evil in his own doing, and impute it to himself. To fear the day of judgment. To dread hell. To desire eternal life with all spiritual longing. To have the expectation of death every day before his eyes. To watch over his actions at all times. To know certainly that in all places the eye of God is upon him. Those evil thoughts which come into his heart, immediately to dash to pieces on Christ, and to make them known to his spiritual senior. To keep his lips from evil and wicked discourse. Not to be fond of much talking. Not to speak vain words, or such as provoke laughter. Not to love much or violent laughter. To give willing attention to the sacred readings. To pray frequently. Every day to confess his past sins to God in prayer, with tears and groaning; from thenceforward to reform as to those sins. Not to fulfil the desires of the flesh. To hate self-will. In all things to obey the commands of the abbot, even though he himself (which God forbid) live not up to his own rule; remembering our Lord's command, 'What they say, do; but what they do, do ye not.' Not to desire to be called a saint before he is one, but first to be one, that he may be truly called one. Every day to fulfil the commands of God in action. To love chastity. To hate nobody. To have no jealousy; to endulge no envy. Not to love contention. To avoid self-conceit. To reverence seniors. To love juniors. To pray for enemies in the love of Christ. After a disagreement, to be reconciled before the going down of the sun. And never to despair of the mercy of God."

He who should examine himself by such a rule as this, setting aside one or two points which are peculiar to the inside of a monastery, would surely

learn something of a Christian temper; he could not use it long without becoming a better man, or learning how to become so. Many others of the regulations are admirable for the purpose of uniting a society of old and young: as the third, which directs that, in important questions, all shall be called to council, "for God often reveals to the youngest and simplest minds what is best;" and the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh, which direct the treatment of the old, and sick, and infirm. But instead of copying these for the reader, it may be well to shew by an example how they were acted upon in some of the principal monasteries in England.

Ingulf, abbot of Croyland, tells us what his own practice was. The old monks, who had borne the burden and heat of the day, when they were past the ability for active labour, were to have a good chamber furnished them in that part of the monastery called the infirmary, and have a clerk or servant specially appointed to wait upon them, who was to receive his allowance of provisions, as was given to the squire's servant when his master paid them a visit, in the abbot's hall. The prior was to send to the old man every day a young monk to be his companion, and to breakfast and dine with him. As for the senior himself, he was to sit at home or walk out, to go or come, according to his own will and pleasure. He might visit the cloisters, the refectory or dining-hall, the sleeping-room, and every other part of the monastery, in his monk's dress or without it, just as he pleased. Nothing unpleasant about the affairs of the monastery was to be mentioned in his presence. Every one was charged to avoid giving him offence: and every thing was to be done for his comfort of mind and body, that he might in the utmost peace and quietness wait for his latter end. It would not be easy to find a more pleasing picture of the care

that Christian love would direct "to rock the cradle of declining age."[2]

The statutes of Lanfranc and Ingulf prescribed the order of divine service to be observed in the abbey-churches throughout the year; and we learn from them what principal officers there were in every large abbey. Next to the abbot came the *prior*, who in the abbot's absence had the chief care of the house; and under him were often one or more sub-priors. These were all removable at the will of the abbot, as all the other officers were.

Another was the *almoner*, who had the oversight of the alms of the house, which were every day distributed at the gate to the poor; and on the anniversary of the founder, or other benefactors to the monastery, took charge of the larger gifts or doles which were then commonly given away in food or clothing. He was also to make inquiry for and visit the poor who needed relief at home.

Another was the *sacrist*, or churchwarden, who took care of the holy vessels for the communion, which was usually celebrated every day; prepared the host, or communion-bread, with his own hands, as it was kept distinct from ordinary bread; provided the wine, and water to mix with it; kept the altar-cloths neat and clean; and furnished wax candles for the evening or early morning-service, when they were required. It was his business to ring the bell at service-time, and to see to the order of burial for the dead; for all which duties he was allowed the help of others to assist him.

The *chamberlain* had the care of the dormitory, provided beds and bedding for the monks, razors, scissors, and towels, and the chief part of their clothing and shoes. Their beds were commonly stuffed with hay or straw. He was also to provide

[2] Letters on the Dark Ages, no. xviii.

iron tools for shoeing the horses of the abbot and prior, and all strangers who visited the abbey.

The *cellarer*, or house-steward, had to provide all the meat and drink used in the monastery, whether for the monks or strangers; as flesh, fish, fowl, wine, bread-corn, malt for their ale and beer, as well as wood for firing, and all kitchen utensils.

There was also the *hospitaler*, or hosteler, who had the special charge of the entertainment of guests, shewing hospitality to all comers, and particularly travellers, being a chief part of the duties of a monastery. He was to have beds, stools or seats, tables, towels, napkins, basins, cups, plates, and spoons; and servants to wait on him, and bring the food for the guests from the cellarer's department.

There was the *master of the infirmary*, who with his servants had the care of the sick and aged. And for their especial comfort, he had often a separate cook and kitchen, where the food was prepared most suitably to their infirm condition.

The *head-chanter*, or precentor, had the chief care of the service in the choir, presided over the singing-men and organist and choristers, provided books for them, and paid them their salaries. He had also the charge of the abbey-seal, kept the chapter-book, or record of the proceedings of their public business, and furnished parchment, pens and ink for the writers, and colours for the painters or draughtsmen, who adorned the old missals or prayer-books.

All the order of proceedings was to be under the most exact discipline. The rules of St. Benedict directed that six hours every day were to be given to manual labour; and for this purpose there were little offices or shops in different parts of the monastery, where the monks employed themselves in their different occupations. Some were the tailors and shoemakers of the monastery; some worked at jewel-

lery, book-binding, carving or sculpture, or cabinet-making; some were writing or painting. To see that all at such times were on their duty, some were chosen out of the number, persons of tried character and prudence, who were called *cursitors*, or round-goers, whose business it was to go round from time to time separately to the workshops, and, without speaking, to notice if any were absent, or standing idle, or sitting to talk with their neighbours. When they were in the church or choir at the night-service, they were to go about in the middle of the psalms and prayers, carrying a dark lantern; and if they found any one asleep, to make some little sound to awake him, or if he slept too fast to be so awaked, to open the dark lantern and turn the light full in his face.

There was commonly a school kept near the great abbeys, and at the expense of the monasteries. The loss of these schools was one of the public evils felt when Henry VIII. so rapaciously broke up these religious houses. In the beginning of queen Elizabeth's reign, A.D. 1562, the speaker of the house of commons, Williams, complained that more than a hundred flourishing schools had been destroyed, which had been maintained by the monasteries, and that ignorance had greatly increased from it. These schools, however, do not seem to have done much to advance the state of learning among the people. The masters were not paid at such a rate as to invite the best teachers. John Somerset, who was afterwards tutor and physician to king Henry VI., began life as master of the grammar-school at Bury St. Edmund's, A.D. 1418. The abbot of that rich monastery gave him a salary of forty shillings a year; which, even according to the value of money at that time, would not be more than about the salary of a village schoolmaster now; and this was to a man

who taught arts and languages, and was one of the most learned of his period. In earlier times the schools were within the abbey; and the children who were admitted to them were taught by the monks, under the inspection of the prior: but these were chiefly intended for the little monks, or children whom their parents, according to the permission of this rule, which cannot be commended, dedicated in infancy to monkhood, without any choice of their own. The neighbours were, however, permitted in most monasteries to send their children to these schools, where they might, without expense, be taught grammar and church-music: and no doubt they thus served to keep up a certain degree of necessary knowledge.

The churches of the old Benedictine monasteries were remarkable in many places for their very great beauty and magnificence. Whatever skill in building the Saxons possessed,—and we have seen that they had skill enough to erect arched roofs, and ornamental windows, and pillars supporting towers,—still it was far outdone by the Norman churchmen, who began, very soon after they were possessed of the English bishopries and abbeys, every where to pull down the old churches, and raise up new ones on a scale of much greater magnificence. And, indeed, the early Norman architects, whether churchmen and monks, or professional builders, soon attained to an excellence and skill which now, at the distance of five or six hundred years, we admire, but cannot imitate. The best attempts at church-architecture which are made now are but imperfect copies from the models which they have left. Much ignorance has prevailed upon this subject; and for a long time these buildings were treated with a base contempt, by persons who had no other notion of architecture than to raise up ugly high brick walls

with holes through them for windows. But now that this excellent art has been revived, Englishmen have begun to feel a proper pride in these noble monuments of the piety and large charity of their forefathers. The old abbey-churches which are yet left have been restored from the mutilation and shameful disfigurements which they had suffered; and though more yet remains to be done, enough is done already to remove what was a crying national disgrace.[3] Among the Benedictine churches still remaining to this day, are to be reckoned, St. Alban's, which, except the Saxon portions yet left, was begun in the time of Lanfranc and William the Conqueror, but has received some later alterations; Westminster Abbey, which, though handsomely built by Edward the Confessor, was rebuilt in Henry III.'s time, chiefly at that king's expense; Selby Abbey, founded by the Conqueror himself; Tewksbury, in Gloucestershire; Rumsey, in the New Forest, Hants, the beautiful church of an old Benedictine nunnery, founded by bishop Ethelwold, in king Edgar's reign; Peterborough, turned, happily, into a cathedral-church at the Reformation; Bath, Gloucester, and Chester, preserved by the same means; Shrewsbury, Great Malvern, and Brecon. Among those of equal magnificence shamefully destroyed, in many cases to the great injury of religion, (for whatever became

[3] Bishop Tanner, who wrote about one hundred years ago, says of the old abbeys: "they were really noble buildings, though *not actually so grand and neat*, yet perhaps as much admired in their times *as Chelsea and Greenwich hospitals are now!*" This amiable man was a lover of antiquity; yet this was all he ventured to say against the miserable notions of his time. The great archbishop Fenelon, who lived in France at the same period, compares a style of vicious ornament in speaking to the style of one of the cathedrals built by our Norman forefathers in Normandy! Such was English and French taste in the beginning of the last century.

of the monks, the churches ought to have been spared,) were Ramsey and Thorney, Hunts; Tavistock, Devon; Colchester; Hyde Abbey, near Winchester; St. Augustine's, Canterbury, the abode of the first English mission, now, all but the beautiful gateway, utterly levelled to the ground; Croyland and Spalding, Lincolnshire; Reading Abbey, the foundation and burial-place of Henry I.; Bury St. Edmund's; Glastonbury; Malmsbury; Evesham; Whitby; and St. Mary's, York;—not to mention some hundreds of priories and lesser religious houses; king Alfred's nunnery, founded for his daughter at Shaftsbury; king Edward the Elder's, at Wilton, and many more: of all which, scarcely, in one or two places, any trace is to be found.

The portion of the buildings next in beauty to the churches was the chapter-house, or council-chamber, where all rose at the coming of the abbot, and received him with every mark of reverence. The style of homage and respect paid by the members of these religious houses to their superiors was in accordance with the homage paid by vassals to their lord; but when the power of the abbot seemed to exceed the rules, it might be checked by the decision of the chapter. The practice of obedience is, doubtless, one of the hardest things for human nature to learn; and no institution provided for it so well as the monasteries, if it could have been always duly regulated and limited. But the abbots, like the bishops, in Norman times often became great barons, and took more than their share both of the revenues and government. The style of these beautiful buildings may be judged of from those which still remain in the precincts of our cathedrals, particularly at Salisbury.

Adjoining the church and chapter-house were the cloisters; where the monks read, or walked and

conversed, and where the children sometimes were brought to say their lessons in summer-weather to the prior. The refectory, or dining-hall, was often a part of the building of great size and beauty; but of this few specimens yet remain. The dormitory, where the monks slept in a common chamber, was a large upper room, sometimes built over the cloisters; and in large monasteries there were sometimes more than one. Old and young were to sleep in the same apartment—and not the young alone—that the presence of the aged might serve as a check to indiscreet mirth. There were to be not fewer than from ten to twenty in one chamber; and they had a lamp burning.

In every great abbey there was a large room called the *scriptory*, or writing-room; where several writers were employed in copying books for the use of the library, or to supply religious persons who sought some portion of Scripture or a devotional treatise. They also frequently copied some parts of the writings of the fathers, or the Latin classics, and made histories and chronicles. The abbots of St. Alban's did good service in this way. The abbot Paul built the scriptory in Lanfranc's time, which had afterwards an estate settled separately upon it; and John Whethamsted, an abbot, who built a new library in Henry VI.'s reign, is said to have had copies of eighty different works made while he was abbot. The same was done at Glastonbury, at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, at Bury St. Edmund's, and other places; for the larger monasteries were all careful of their libraries.[4]

4 "Libraries were formed in *all* the monasteries, and schools founded in them, for teaching the literature of the times." — Bp. Porteus, vol. ii. Serm. vii. It has been suggested to the writer, since the first edition of this work appeared, that this assertion wants confirmation. Perhaps it is

The rules of St. Benedict advise his monks to have their abbeys situated near a running stream, that they may have a mill on the premises. This was generally observed. They were also to have a garden, a bakehouse and brewhouse, that there might be as little need as possible for sending abroad for their supplies. And, for the same reason, they were recommended to have all necessary arts practised among themselves, that they might supply themselves with clothing, and whatever else they wanted. As the abbeys became more rich, these arts, however, were not exercised so much by the monks as by the servants of the monastery. And it must be confessed that learning did not advance among them in the same proportion as manual labour decreased.

It was common for the early Norman kings to come and keep Christmas, or other of the chief feasts of the Church, in some of the principal monasteries, as Hyde Abbey, near Winchester, Westminster, or St. Alban's. This was the time when the abbot's hospitality was most especially exerted, as the number of retainers the kings brought with them was no trifle. At St. Alban's, in Henry III.'s time, there was stabling provided for three hundred horses.

The Benedictines, as they were the most ancient and numerous, so they were much the richest order of monks in England. The Saxon kings and nobles, particularly in Dunstan's time, had given them large manors and estates; and the native English, as well as the Normans, seem to have been chiefly attached

too general; for the lesser monasteries, priories, and cells, were usually without libraries: but when John Boston, the monk of Bury St. Edmund's, travelled round to make his catalogue of all the books in different abbeys, about A.D. 1400, he found more than two hundred libraries containing books fit to be entered in his catalogue, being various works of near seven hundred authors, beside various copies of the Scriptures, and comments.

to them. A great number of bishops were taken before and after the Conquest from their monasteries; and the three archbishops who presided next after the Conquest, and others in the following reigns, were Benedictines. It was to this order, also, that those who were called mitred abbots or mitred priors belonged; of whom twenty-nine had commonly the dignity of peers in parliament, ranking, like bishops, as barons. But this was at a later period, after the reign of Henry III. The first Norman kings did not govern by parliaments.

II. The next order in the rank of time was that of the CLUNIACS. It was founded by Odo of Clugny in Burgundy, as has been already mentioned,[5] from whose monastery it took its name. These monks were, indeed, only a reformed order of Benedictines. They lived under their rule, and wore the same dress, a black frock or cassock, with a white tunic or woollen shirt underneath, and a black hood or cowl to put over the head. The nuns wore a dress of like colour. Shortly after the Conquest, William, earl Warenne, son-in-law to the Conqueror, and one of his richest barons, brought these monks into England, and built their first house at Lewes in Sussex, about A.D. 1077. In the reign of Henry I. it was an order in some esteem among the Normans; and an attempt was made to turn some of the old Benedictine abbeys into Cluniac priories; but it did not succeed. The English monks were not favourable to this order, which was rather a French than an English one. Its houses were for the most part filled with Norman or French monks; and they were all subject to the abbot of Clugny, who sometimes, when he had interest enough with the pope, levied contributions upon the priories in England. This was not done at first, however, but when the authority of the

[5] See p. 227.

pope was at its height. There was in Henry I.'s time an eminently good and learned man at the head of the order, Peter the Venerable, abbot of Clugny, who in A.D. 1130 paid a visit to England He had an honourable reception; and by his advice, an Englishman, called Robert of Ryton, who had been on a crusade and taken prisoner by the Saracens, attempted to translate Mahomet's Koran, which he had brought from the East, to give the Christians in Europe a better knowledge of the religion of that impostor. This was the first beginning of the knowledge of the languages of the East. The principal Cluniac house in England, besides that at Lewes, was afterwards the abbey of Bermondsey, in Southwark. There were never more than twenty of these houses in the country.

III. THE CISTERCIANS, also, like the Cluniacs, a reformed order of Benedictines, were much more numerous. They derived their name from Cisteaux or Citeaux, a village in the same province where Clugny is situated, between Dijon and Chalons. Here an Englishman, Stephen Harding, who had gone to try his religious fortunes abroad about the beginning of Henry I.'s reign, had become abbot of a little abbey. He was not the first founder of the new sect; but when Robert of Molème, who had attempted to keep together a society there, had left it for want of encouragement, he persevered, and was enabled at last to succeed. The Cluniacs had abated something of the rigorous labour enjoined by Benedict, and professed to keep more to reading and improvement of the mind. On the contrary, the Cistercians chose rather to increase the bodily labour; whence the abbot Peter charged them with preferring the part of Martha, cumbered with much serving, to the part of Mary, who sat at the feet of Christ, and heard his word. Stephen Harding was

growing old at the head of his small society, but persevered in his discipline of silence, watching, and fasting; till in A.D. 1113, he was rewarded by the arrival of the famous ST. BERNARD, followed by thirty companions, who came to enlist themselves as monks of the Cistercian order. From that time it began rapidly to flourish; St. Bernard's excellent talents and remarkable piety made him in his lifetime the most influential person in Christendom. William Giffard, bishop of Winchester, in A.D. 1128, founded the first Cistercian abbey in England, at Waverley, in Surrey. The beautiful ruined abbey of Tintern on the Wye was founded three years after. Then, in A.D. 1132, Walter l'Espec, a baron in the north, founded the still more beautiful abbey of Rieval; Roger de Moubray, a few years later, was the founder of Byland; and Thurstan encouraged the prior of the Benedictines at St. Mary's, York, to found Fountains. The order reached its height of power in A.D. 1145, when Eugene III., a Cistercian and pupil of St. Bernard's, became pope. King Stephen had appointed his nephew William to succeed Thurstan at York; but the Yorkshire Cistercians persuaded the chapter of the cathedral to elect for archbishop Henry Murdoch, abbot of Fountains; and by the help of pope Eugene they gained their point. It continued in favour long afterwards, when king Edward I., though he was jealous of the power of other monasteries, founded the Cistercian abbey of Vale Royal.

The Cistercians were called white monks, from their dress, which was a white frock or cassock, over which they wore a black cloak when they were beyond the walls of the monastery. Their abbeys, which have all been ruined, are still left in their ruins in the lovely spots where they were first fixed by the disciples of Bernard, out of the way of the common

haunts of men, in lonely mountain-valleys, where they taught the barren wilderness to smile. Bernard himself was guided by his peculiar piety to make choice of such places: "Believe me," he says to Henry Murdoch, "you will find more lessons in the woods than in books. Trees and stones will teach you what you cannot learn from masters.[6] Have you forgotten how it is written, *He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock?* (Deut. xxxii. 13.) You have need not so much of reading, as of prayer: and thus may God open your heart to understand his law and his commandments." No doubt such was the feeling of many of our countrymen who dwelt at Tintern, or at Fountains and Rieval. But here, as the early Benedictines had reclaimed the marsh-lands, so the Cistercians reclaimed the moors. No man who surveys the places which they chose for their dwellings, but must wonder at the patient industry and love of toil, amidst the glories of nature, but without her wealth, by which they raised those graceful churches to hymn the praises of redemption in the desert; and where the wrathful Conqueror had left a waste without inhabitant, covered the hills with sheep, and made the valleys stand thick with corn; and planted orchards, dug fishponds, and laid out gardens. They laboured, and others have entered into their labours: it is well; but let us confess that Bernard of Clairval had the spirit of a saint, and the soul of a Christian patriot, to guide his choice; for what modern sect has conferred such benefit upon their country as the laborious Bernardines?

[6] One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

WORDSWORTH

RIEVAL ABBEY.

There were about one hundred houses of Cistercian monks and nuns when Henry VIII. destroyed them. Some of the most remarkable, besides those founded by king John and Edward I., already mentioned, were Furness in Lancashire, founded by king Stephen; Lantony, Monmouthshire; Jorval or Jervaux, and Kirkstall, Yorkshire; Melrose, in Scotland; Vale Crusis, Denbighshire, and several others in Wales; and Woburn, Combermere and other choice spots, where English noblemen have turned the whole abode of monkhood to a scene of more enlightened, if not more generous, hospitality of their own. And no doubt a sense of the religion which once hallowed those abodes has often taught their new possessors to make them still a house of refuge for the oppressed, and a seat of more discerning charity.

Reader, if you are led to visit one of these spots, revere the religion which chose such places of earthly

sojourn; and believe that, however blemished by mistaken vows, and disgraced sometimes by foul departures from the promise in which it began, yet true piety and mercy raised those stones; and while you are thankful that such retreats are no longer needed for those who would live to God apart, secured from wrong, grant that, if they were, no fitter scene of retirement could be found!

IV. The Carthusians were a sect who did not aim to be numerous, but rather prided themselves on being select and few. Bruno of Cologne, a priest of the cathedral in that city, was their founder, about A.D. 1084. Their discipline was strict and severe; and their dress coarse, and so contrived as almost to disfigure their persons. They had no abbot, but were under a superior, who was called the grand prior. Their laws professed to limit very narrowly the quantity of land and the number of flocks and herds they should possess. They had but nine houses in England, the first being founded at Witham, Somerset, A.D. 1181; and the most remarkable, that which is still called the Charterhouse, London, now the excellent Thomas Sutton's school and hospital; and the priory of Shene in Surrey, founded by king Henry V. This sect produced some men of very strict and holy life, particularly Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, whose name is in the calendar for November the seventeenth. Even the wicked and dissolute king John shewed respect to his remains; when happening to be at Lincoln for a meeting with the Scottish king, hearing that the bishop was about to be carried to his grave, he took his place with king Alexander among the pall-bearers

These were the only orders of monks, properly so called, which were established in England; if we except a few houses of the monks of Grandmont, and other French monks and nuns, which decayed

before the Reformation. But there were also orders of priests called REGULAR CANONS, or clergymen living under a common rule, to which rule also certain communities of females subjected themselves, like the other orders of nuns.

I. AUGUSTIN CANONS. They took their name from the great St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo in Africa, A.D. 395; but their order was not founded till the time of pope Alexander II., 1061. They came into England in the reign of Henry I., were very favourably received, and soon rivalled the Benedictine monks in public esteem. They had in all about one hundred and seventy houses, dispersed in almost every quarter of the kingdom: of which the largest were at Plympton, Devon; at Carlisle; at Chick, or St. Osith's, Essex; at Leicester; at St. Bartholomew's, London; at Walsingham, Norfolk, where they had a remarkable image and chapel of the blessed Virgin, which drew the ignorant people to make superstitious pilgrimages, and present costly offerings, believing that some miraculous power resided there, shortly before the Reformation; at Haghmon Abbey, Shropshire; Cirencester; at Oseney, near Oxford; Newstead Abbey, Notts; at Bristol, which is now the cathedral-church; at Kenilworth, Warwickshire; and Gisborough, Bridlington, and the beautiful Bolton Abbey, Yorkshire. They were not all alike in dress, but were commonly called black canons; wearing a long black cassock with a white rochet over it, and over all a black cloak or hood. The monks always shaved their chins; but the canons wore their beards, and caps or bonnets on their heads instead of cowls.

II. PREMONSTRANTS, or white canons, who wore a white cassock, and the rest of their dress white instead of black. In other respects their rule was the same. The chief of their houses, which were

thirty-five in number, was Welbeck Abbey, Notts Their name was derived from Premonstré, a town of Picardy, in France, where the superior of this order resided.

III. GILBERTINES. This was an order of canons of English foundation, having been settled under a rule of a Lincolnshire priest, called Gilbert of Sempringham, A.D. 1148. The rule was made for both men and women, out of the two rules of St. Benedict and the Augustin canons; the women living chiefly like the Cistercian nuns, and the men like the Augustins. The order was acceptable to many poor females in the miserable reign of Stephen; and Gilbert is said to have enlisted fifteen hundred of them in the course of a few years. The peculiarity of his plan was, that he built his convents for men and women adjoining each other, with separate apartments for each. It is said to have been much more popular with the gentler sex than with the other. There were twenty-five houses of Gilbertines, chiefly in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, the principal being at Sempringham, and Watton, in the East Riding, which still in part remains. This last house bore no very high character when it was first instituted; and the order itself seems to have been ill-contrived though the founder is said to have been an honest simple-minded man. He died A.D. 1181, at the extraordinary age of one hundred and six.

Lastly; we must briefly mention the two MILITARY ORDERS which arose at this remarkable period out of the crusades, and were a striking proof in themselves, how completely the spirit of war had seized upon the minds of men, since they could thus turn war into a service of religion.

I. THE KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN, or Hospitalers, had their name from a hospital built at Jerusalem for the use of pilgrims coming to the Holy Land,

and dedicated to St. John the Baptist. Their business there was to entertain pilgrims at that hospital, and to defend them from the Saracens as they went and returned. Godfrey of Bouillon, and Baldwin, the two first kings of Jerusalem, favoured these knights, finding them serviceable in their wars with the Mahometans. They soon spread into societies about Europe; and after a hundred and fifty years from their first beginning are said to have possessed nineteen thousand manors in different parts of Christendom. It was not long after their first appearance, when they came over into England, and had a house built for them in London. This stood near Smithfield Bar, where the ancient gateway may still be seen; and it became one of the richest houses belonging to any religious order in England. Their superior was held of such dignity, that he sat as the first baron of the lay barons in parliament. Their dress, over their armour, was a black cloak with a white cross upon the fore-part of it.

II. The Knights Templars were instituted A.D. 1118, about thirty years later than the Hospitalers, and were named from their having apartments first given them by king Baldwin near the supposed site of the Jewish temple, in his own palace erected there. The rule of both these orders was like that of the Augustin canons; but the Templars wore a white cloak, instead of a black one, with a red cross on their left shoulder. They came into England early in king Stephen's reign, and first gained possession of a house in Holborn, but afterwards removed to the place now called from them the Temple; where they have left a beautiful church, and some of their tombs may yet be seen in it. This was their chief possession and head-quarters in England; but they had other houses in towns and in the country. Their houses were called preceptories, as

the Knights Hospitalers' were called commandries Their superior was called the master of the Temple, as the chief of the Hospitalers was called the grand prior of St. John.

The Templars were the only religious order which was not allowed to remain here till the Reformation. They lasted only about two hundred years; when in A.D. 1312, king Edward II. received a bull from pope Clement V. for their suppression, and directing him to give their estates to the order of Hospitalers. He refused to execute the last part of the pope's instructions for about a twelvemonth; but this poor prodigal king was not able to keep the property in his own hands. He was in the midst of trouble with his own barons, and wanted the pope's friendship, that he might have his name to use against them. He was therefore obliged to make over the estates to the grand prior; and thus that order continued to hold them till the time of Henry VIII., when the whole number of their commandries amounted to eight and twenty. The history of these two orders belongs to the history of the crusades.

There were, besides all these abbeys and religious houses, a great number of ALIEN PRIORIES, founded on the plan which Edward the Confessor had begun, in subjection to foreign abbeys. The Norman kings or barons, who had a kind of family-interest in some of the Norman abbeys, gave lands to them in England; on which the Norman monks built priories, or cells, which was the name given to the smallest kind of religious house. These alien priories were all broken up before the Reformation. When our kings lost Normandy, there was no prudence in letting abbots, who were become subject to France, keep hold of English lands or manors. Edward III. seized on them, before he made war upon France; and in the second year of Henry V., an act of par-

liament was passed, which put an end to them, A.D. 1414.

Such is a short account of the religious societies that sprang up as thickly in these warlike and troubled times, as ever did the new sects of Protestants in the civil wars of king Charles I. and the Covenanters. Such changes are the fruit of troubled times and evil days. In part they repair the evil; but they bring their own evil with them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BECKET AND HENRY II. STEPHEN LANGTON AND KING JOHN. THE CLERGY FORBIDDEN TO MARRY. MARRIED BISHOPS AND PRIESTS AFTERWARDS.

I pray you,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE plan of this little work will not allow room for any long account of a person who is commonly brought in to fill many pages in the history of the reign of king Henry II., the eminent THOMAS BECKET, archbishop of Canterbury, A.D. 1162–70. This unfortunate prelate has not been treated with much tenderness by modern historians who have undertaken to write accounts of this period of English history. "His whole conduct," we are told, "was odious and contemptible, and his industry directed to the pursuit of objects pernicious to mankind."[1] There is, indeed, little satisfaction to be derived from a view of the conduct of either party in the dispute; but something of respect is due to one who chose rather to sacrifice his life than abandon the principles for which he had long contended under a conviction of their truth. And a judgment of the cause, for which he was cruelly mur-

[1] David Hume.

dered, will best be formed from a short statement of the facts.

It has been seen that the Saxon kings governed England with the help and advice of their Witenagemot, or council of wise men, an assembly which answered very much to our present houses of parliament. It was an assembly which met once a year or oftener, wherever the kings kept their Christmas, Easter, or Whitsuntide. Bishops, and earls, and abbots, and thanes, who had property of a certain value, were all entitled to a seat in it. It was the chief court of justice, as well as the public council of the nation; and the kings could do nothing of importance—nay, they could not dispose of their own estates by will, without the consent of this council.[2] When the seven kingdoms were united by Egbert (for there was no independent kingdom except in such provinces as were held by the Danes, after his times), this king, with his son Ethelwolf, gave a charter, signed by his earls and thanes met in Witenagemot at Wilton, A.D. 838, in which he confirmed to archbishop Ceolnoth the liberty and property of the churches and monasteries in Kent, with the right of electing bishops and abbots, on condition that they should accept him and his successors as their patrons and protectors, as the kings of Kent had been before.

When William the Conqueror came to be king of England, he did not like these frequent parliaments; and, first of all, he took away from them all their authority as a court of justice, by setting up the court called the *King's Hall*, which consisted of the great men who attended at his palace, as the lord high constable, the lord mareschal, the lord high steward, the high chamberlain, the lord chancellor, who

[2] King Alfred's Will.

kept the king's seal and examined all his letters and grants which were to pass under his name, the lord treasurer, who was his chief adviser about taxes, and a few of the chief barons, whom the king might choose to summon. These were assisted by some persons learned in the laws, who were commonly Norman clergymen. They were called the king's justices; the chief of them, who had great power in the state, being distinguished by the title of chief justice. This king's hall, which afterwards was fixed at Westminster, became the final court of appeal in all causes; and the old shire-moots, or county-courts, of the Saxons, had very little power left.

In the next place, William the Conqueror destroyed the freedom of the Saxon parliament, by making it no longer a matter of right for those who had a seat in it, but summoning only such barons as he pleased; and, instead of allowing them to meet once or oftener every year, he assembled them only as it suited his own pleasure. Thus, instead of a free government, the persons who composed the council of state, and those who had the administering of the laws, were to be appointed, controlled, and removed, according to the absolute will of the sovereign.

There was only one of the institutions of the country which the Conqueror left free from these encroachments. This was the Church, which was still to be governed by its own laws, as it had been in Saxon times; but in order to prevent bishops from interfering at the county-courts, where in Saxon times they used to sit with the sheriff, they were now bidden to try all causes, in which they or their archdeacons were concerned, in courts of their own, according to the canons and laws by which bishops were guided. This separation, which was intended to diminish the power of the Church,

in fact increased it. The punishments inflicted in the Norman courts of justice were not much different from those sometimes inflicted in the Saxon times, but they were cruelly multiplied for the most petty offences. Maiming of hand or foot, putting out the eyes, branding, and the like, were most common. In Saxon times, every man might follow his game, or invite his friend to do it, on his own estate. But William made it a high privilege, granted to very few; and turned large tracts of country into forests, driving out the inhabitants, that he might preserve beasts of chase for his own sport. Under his forest-laws, if a man slew hart or hind, hare or partridge, he was to lose his eyesight. Loss of life, which under the Saxon laws was of rare occurrence, was now so common, that we read of forty or fifty suffering at one assize. This cruelty alone led persons to seek admission into some of the lower orders of the priesthood, that they might be rather punished by hard penances, than be tried and sentenced without a jury; for this institution, founded by Alfred, if not earlier, was also taken away for a full century after the Conquest. And the bishops and higher clergy naturally were disposed to extend the jurisdiction of their own courts; while the kings, becoming jealous of their power, sought to deprive them of it.

Thus matters stood, when Henry II. raised Becket, an Englishman born in London of parents who were of the higher class of citizens, to the primacy. He had been his chancellor, and, as a member of the king's hall or high court of justice, had shared his counsels; he had also been his companion in more private hours, and was his intimate friend. There can be no doubt, that, by raising him to the highest place in the Church, the king expected to find in him a man altogether fitted to aid his own

intentions of changing the laws under which the Church was governed. But Becket, immediately on becoming archbishop, gave up his chancellor's office, changed his dress and habit from that of a lawyer's robes to a prelate's mitre and cope; wore sackcloth next to his body; and soon made it appear that his mind was equally changed. He refused to appoint a friend of the king's to be archdeacon of Canterbury; and he declined giving his pastoral blessing to a bad man, named Clarembald, who had been made abbot of St. Augustine's.

Other quarrels arose between Becket and some of the barons of Kent, one of whom he excommunicated. This gave the king great offence; for he thought his authority dishonoured, when his knights, who held their lands by his grant, were excommunicated without his leave. And the use of excommunication for slight occasions, private quarrels and the like, was one of the bad practices of the Church in these troubled times.

But now came the great contest. Henry called together a council of the realm,—it is incorrect to call this a parliament, as many writers do,—consisting of the two archbishops, twelve of the bishops, and forty-three lay barons, at Clarendon near Salisbury, on the 25th of January, A.D. 1164. Here he laid before them some laws, which he called *the customs of England*, for bringing all the Church-laws under the control of the king's hall, subjecting the courts of the archbishop and other bishops to an appeal to the king's chief justice; in other words, to make the whole government of the Church depend upon what the king, with his council of state, should appoint for its laws. We must not judge of this dispute by the state of government and law as it is now, or as it has been for some time past; but must ask how things were in Becket's time. On the one

side, the number of persons exempted from the jurisdiction of the king's courts had increased in such a way as to create a public inconvenience: for under the name of clergy were included not only priests and deacons, but sub-deacons, acolytes, and others who filled offices like those of beadles and sextons in our time; and not only these, but the officers and domestic servants of bishops, abbots, and other dignified ecclesiastics. Many of these had nothing clerical about them but the name; and some, to eke out a maintenance, appear to have exercised needful arts, to have kept shops and even taverns. The king's party complained that these persons presumed on their immunity from the common law, that many disorders were committed by them, and even homicides were not unfrequent; which might be true in an age when almost all went armed, and if a fray ensued, blood would often follow.

The occasion which was taken for this motion of the king's was an offence of still deeper dye. A wicked priest in the diocese of Salisbury, where this council was held, had committed murder. For this crime he had been sentenced by a Church-court to perpetual penance and imprisonment in a monastery; a kind of punishment not unlike that inflicted on culprits in penitentiaries: it was very lately practised in Spanish monasteries; and was often so severe, consisting of hard fare, solitude, and silence, that many have thought it worse than death. But the king demanded that such offenders, whether clergy or laymen, should be tried in his courts, and, if guilty, suffer the highest penalty of the law. The punishment he required was according to the law of God; but it was not, as he represented it, according to the customs of England; for the old English laws imposed this perpetual penance, sometimes adding

banishment, but they left the culprit in the power of the Church.[4]

On the other hand, these constitutions of Clarendon went to establish the great grievance, under which the Church had suffered in the time of Rufus and Henry I., that when bishopric, abbey, or priory should be vacant, it should be placed in the king's hands, and he should receive the revenues, as if it had been part of his own domain; that the persons should be elected by him in council, by whatever councillors he should be pleased to call. To consent to such a law was plainly to deliver up the Church, her goods, chattels, and estates, to the will of a despot, who might pillage it and deprive it of its ministers and pastors without check or control. In fact, Henry II.,—who has been called "the greatest prince of his time for wisdom, virtue, and abilities; whose character, in public as well as in private life, is almost without a blemish; who possessed every accomplishment both of body and mind, which makes a man either estimable or amiable,"[5]—besides a few instances of shorter duration, held the see of Lincoln alone in his own hands for seventeen years, while his base-born son received the income.

Becket signed these acts of the council of Clarendon, but revoked his assent to them, and appealed to the pope, who refused to confirm them. The king, not daring, as it seems, to impeach him for disobedience to laws so enacted, took another way to drive him to submission. He accused him for not appearing in person, but sending a deputy to appear for him, to a summons he had received; and the council at Northampton sentenced all his goods to be confiscated. This was in October fol-

[4] Laws of Alfred, Ethelred, and Henry I.
[5] Hume, Hist. of Engl. chap. ix.

lowing. He was also accused of some breach of trust in his chancellorship three or four years before; but this charge it is scarcely possible for any one to suppose to have been more than a pretence. He behaved at this council with great courage and firmness, having almost all the bishops and barons, by fear or favour, or honestly thinking it the best course, united against him; and then seeing there was no safety for his property or personal liberty, he secretly withdrew to France.

With what fortitude he endured a banishment of six years in that country, persevering in the strong resolve of a mind made up to abide the worst, stedfast in the midst of the greatest dangers, with the pope and king of France now favouring him and now deserting his cause, it would take too long a space to relate. One or two facts, commonly omitted by the modern historians, respecting the much-praised sovereign who drove him to seek that place of refuge, it may be well to mention.

King Henry II., provoked at the good reception given to Becket by the king of France, banished and seized on all the goods of every person who was in any way related to the exiled archbishop, sparing neither old nor young, women nor children. They flocked to him in great numbers at Pontigny in France, where he was residing, and their destitute appearance increased his distress. He sent them about, however, to different friends, with letters of recommendation, and they were well relieved at monasteries, or by charitable persons in France. So that this expedient did not injure Becket so much as it increased the indignation felt against the king.

Next to this, hearing a report that Gilbert of Sempringham and his canons had been sending money abroad to Becket, he obliged him, with all the superiors and treasurers of his convents, to come

before his high court of justice. The judges, respecting the age and piety of Gilbert, offered to dismiss him, if he would take an oath that he had not done what was laid to his charge. It does not appear that any other kind of trial was thought of; evidence before a jury was out of the question. The aged man, who was now beyond his eightieth year, replied that he would rather go into banishment than take such an oath. The Gilbertines were kept in prison, and on the last day of term were expecting sentence of exile and confiscation, when a messenger arrived from the king who was then in Normandy, directing the business to be put off till he could return and take more ample cognisance of it. The religious were at this message set free; and Gilbert, on regaining his liberty, declared at once before the judges that the charge was altogether false; "but," said he, "I would not clear myself as from a crime, from the charge of having helped a prelate suffering for the Church."

The Cistercians had almost as narrow an escape. Henry threatened to seize on all their monasteries, because Becket was harboured at a house belonging to their order at Pontigny; but the banished man, when he heard of it, removed to Sens, where he was protected by the king of France.

On the other hand, Becket himself was not a pattern of Christian meekness. He did not bear his banishment with the gentle spirit of Anselm. He continued to write threatening letters to the bishops and barons of the king's party, and he excommunicated his chief councillors. It is plain, that if the public feeling had not been in his favour, these sentences of excommunication would have done but little harm; they would have had little or no effect, like those which the popes sent out afterwards against good bishop Grostête and his friends. But Becket

had been grievously wronged; and the people, who groaned under the same tyranny, looked upon him as the champion of religion and liberty. When he parted from the meeting of the council of Northampton, they crowded around him in such throngs, that it was with difficulty he could find his way out of the multitude, who on their knees besought his blessing. And when at length he returned, only thirty days before his murder, Nov. 30, A.D. 1170, on which day he landed at Sandwich, the poor of the place flocked to his landing, having seen out at sea the archbishop's silver cross on board the vessel, and cried aloud, —"Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord, the father of orphans, the judge of the widow's cause!"[6]

King Henry II., who, with his officers, had held all the property of the see for the last six years, though he had made peace with Becket in July, had seized on all his rents due at Martinmas, and had made such clean work on his estates, that he found little but empty houses and ruined farms. Oppression has driven many a wise man mad. Can it be a

[6] "The impious application of Scripture must have been suggested by the priests, when these simple people spread their garments in the way, and sang, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*"—SOUTHEY, *Book of the Church*, chap. viii. The spreading of these garments in the way is mentioned only in the manuscript Life of Becket by his chaplain, Herbert of Bosham: the historians of the time do not mention it; and it seems to be an exaggeration. As to the words, they were commonly used in the middle ages as words of welcome to religious persons. Thus when the French king St. Louis, in A.D. 1249, took Damietta from the Saracens, the poor Christian slaves and captives flocked from their places of retreat, and met him with shouts, as he entered the city in procession, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." And this use of them seems to be approved by an excellent writer of the reformed Church of England. See Dr. Edward Hyde's *Christ and his Church*, 1658, p. 221.

matter of wonder, that a man, whose offence at first was no more than that he had sought to maintain the liberties of the Church as they were fixed by the laws, should have had his spirit embittered by such manifold oppressions? He was not, indeed, a man of gentle temper, but rash and vehement. And now he fell, not as a martyr should, but refusing to release from excommunication three prelates who were his brethren in office, though they were the king's friends; and one of whom, Gilbert Foliot, bishop of London, was a wise and moderate man, who acted in honest prudence, thinking that, in a choice of evils, the best course for the Church was for a time to suffer and be silent.

It is well known that he was murdered by four knights or barons of king Henry's court; who, hearing their master, in one of his fits of distempered passion,—in which his friend Peter of Blois says he behaved more like a wild beast than a man,—complain that no one would avenge him against one turbulent priest, took an oath either to compel Becket to withdraw his excommunications, or to carry him out of the kingdom; or at his refusal to do either, to kill him. They found him altogether intractable, and hewed him down with their swords in the cathedral. He fell on the altar-steps, having knelt in the posture of prayer; and his last words were, "To God, to the holy Virgin, to the saints the patrons of this church, to the martyr St. Denis, I commit myself and the Church's cause."[7]

There is no need to believe that the king authorised this murder. On the contrary, he is said to have

[7] Surely in these solemn words, however mixed with the superstition of the day, there is something more becoming the immortal hopes of man, than in the last scene of David Hume, the most bitter assailant of his memory, who died talking with the pagan mockery of an old blasphemer of the cross, of his last voyage in Charon's barge!

been anxious to prevent it, and submitted to the most humbling penance at Becket's tomb, to manifest his sorrow for the angry speech which had prompted the four knights to undertake it. These miserable men retired first to Yorkshire, to the house of a baron, who was their friend; but finding themselves avoided by every one, and that none would eat or drink under the same roof, they took a voyage to Rome, whence, by the pope's order, they went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, spent the remainder of their lives in a penitential discipline, and were buried near a door of the Templars' church there, with an inscription over their tomb: "Here lie the wretched men who martyred St. Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury."

> It is the curse of kings to be attended
> By slaves, that take their humours for a warrant
> To break within the bloody house of life;
> And, on the winking of authority,
> To understand a law; to know the meaning
> Of dangerous majesty, when perchance it frowns
> More upon humour than advis'd respect.

Becket was a man whose mind was cultivated with ancient and modern learning; and while he was allowed a life of peace, he lived much in the society of scholars. He was above some of the foolish superstitions which were now prevailing in many of the monasteries, and were generally mixed up with the religion of the time. A Cistercian abbot, dining at his table, having taken up a good part of the conversation with stories of the miracles of Robert of Molème, one of the founders of his sect, Becket listened patiently for a while, but then broke off the subject, by turning to him with some indignation and contempt, and exclaiming, "So these are your miracles!"

What is more remarkable is, that neither Becket, nor STEPHEN LANGTON, who, in king John's time,

played as distinguished a part, did much to increase the dominion of the pope in England, however they were placed in opposition to their sovereigns. It was one who is generally passed over by our historians —the French priest, William of Corboil, as before mentioned—who brought the yoke upon the neck of the English Church. This is the very essence of popery, to give the pope the authority of universal bishop, and to act only as his deputy. Other errors, and superstitions, and bad practices, may be remedied; but if there is only one authority in the Church, from which all reformation must come, we are without resource until the pope is pleased to grant it. Stephen Langton is a remarkable person in Church-history, as having made the convenient division of the Bible into chapters, as we still keep it. He was a diligent preacher and commentator on Scripture. It is well known that king John and the monks of Canterbury being at variance about the election of an archbishop, pope Innocent III. took the matter into his own hands, and sent over Stephen Langton, A.D. 1206. He was, however, one who preferred the liberty of his Church and country to the interests of either pope or king; and he took a leading part in the efforts made by the barons to procure a better government in the struggle in which Magna Charta was obtained. Pope Innocent did himself no honour in that struggle; for, after having humbled king John to his heart's content, he took his part against the barons, absolved him from fulfilling the terms to which he had given his promise, and told Langton to excommunicate the champions of liberty. But he chose rather to abide the pope's ban with them.

What was much less to his praise, he took a leading part also in the law first attempted to be forced upon all clergymen by pope Gregory VII., to bind them to a single life. Anselm had tried to make

the English Church receive this law; and it is much to be lamented that so good a man should have been so misled. William of Corboil made a great stir about it in A.D. 1129; and wished to make all the archdeacons and priests put away their wives in the foggy month of November, when their company to make a home cheerful was particularly desired. It all came to nothing, for Henry I. only made the poor clergy compound and keep their wives. But Stephen Langton, A.D. 1225, put out a fierce decree, that married priests should do penance, as if they had committed adultery; and as to their wives, they were to be excommunicated, or worse, if they did not repent and live separate. From this time, for about three hundred years, till the Reformation began, the bishops who were themselves married, or who permitted the clergy to marry, were obliged by the abominable popish law to do it secretly; and as their wives were not publicly allowed, the pope's lawyers called them their mistresses, and caused their children to be reputed bastards. It was this vile law which made the martyr Laurence Saunders, at the time of the Reformation, say with indignation, "What man, fearing God, would not lose this present life, rather than, by prolonging it, not avouch his children to be legitimate, and his marriage lawful and holy?" We are not obliged to believe the foul stories which are raked together by some writers on this subject; for there is no reason to suppose that it was often worse than this. The poor priests were married secretly, and kept their wives under another name. The bishops gave them private license to do it, and tolerated them in it. And it was no unusual thing for the bishops of the Norman-English Church to be married men before Langton's time. Sampson of Bayon, bishop of Worcester, where he succeeded Wulfstan, A.D. 1096, was the father of

Thomas, archbishop of York, the second of that name, who was raised to the see A.D. 1109. Richard Peckett, bishop of Coventry A.D. 1161, was the son of Robert Peckett, a married bishop of the same see. Reginald Fitz-Joceline, archbishop of Canterbury A.D. 1191, was the son of Joceline bishop of Salisbury. Geoffrey Rydal, A.D. 1174, who built a cathedral at Ely, sent this excuse to the pope for not going to Rome to be instituted to his bishopric, that "he had a gospel-dispensation for it; he had married a wife, and therefore he could not come." When pope Innocent III., who took king John's crown from him, had also, by Langton's means, caused the open profession of marriage to be prohibited, there were still bishops privately living with their wives. One of these was Boniface, a Savoyard, and kinsman to the queen of Henry III., who was made archbishop of Canterbury A.D. 1244.

Many of the early popes were married men, or sons of married bishops and priests. Pope Hormisdas was not only married, but left a son, Silverius, who was also pope some time after him. Even after the time that pope Gregory VII. had forbidden priests' marriages, pope Adrian IV., whose proper name was Nicholas Breakspeare, an Englishman, and the only Englishman who ever became pope, was the son of a married priest who lived at Langley, near St. Alban's. He was raised to St. Peter's chair A.D. 1154. More than a hundred years later, A.D. 1265, pope Clement IV., a married priest, who had a wife and children, after having become a widower was made bishop, cardinal, and pope. And no bad pope either. He had two daughters; one of whom choosing to be a nun, he gave her thirty pounds only, that he might not do any thing to help her to break her vow of poverty. The other he married to an honest gentleman of a middle rank,

and gave her three hundred pounds, telling her it was all she was to expect from him. He had also a nephew, who, when he came to be pope, was holding three pieces of preferment. "Choose which you please," said the uncle; "but you must keep one, and give up two." Some of his friends remonstrated against this strictness; but Clement was firm. "It is my business," he said, "not to seek to gratify my natural inclination, but to behave as one put in trust by God." It would have been well, says the honest writer who tells this, if all the popes had followed his example.

CHAPTER XIX.

POPERY AT ITS HEIGHT. PRIVILEGED MONASTERIES. BEGGING FRIARS. CORRUPTIONS. PERSECUTIONS.

Here is my throne: bid kings come bow to it.
SHAKSPEARE.

EADERS who have followed us thus far will have seen that the first and great cause of the success of the pope was the ill government of the Norman kings, who destroyed the old free parliament of the Saxons, and, while they professed to keep the ancient laws, took away the old courts in which justice was administered, and made the last appeal to be to judges who would lose their office if they once resisted the pleasure of the sovereign. The same oppressions which drove the barons to make league against king John, drove the Church, in earlier reigns, to form a closer union with the pope, against sovereigns who broke their oath, and, regardless of human law or divine right, used their power only to plunder and destroy. The favour of the people attended these struggles for liberty: and in these days the only portion of society which preserved their property in peace were the members of those religious houses which charity had reared and placed under the protection of the Church.

Still, however, the power of the pope would never have been established, if the kings themselves had not at last found it more for their own advantage to make

agreement with the Roman pontiff than to continue at variance with him. The Church of England had now become, with the vast number of religious houses founded since the Conquest, very rich; and there was enough both for pope and king to turn to a means of spoil. It was naturally the growth of those disordered times. The great men, who had been guilty of so many deeds of rapine and cruelty in the reign of Rufus and of Stephen, were sometimes struck by the remorse of conscience, and stood forth, like the extortioner Zacchæus, to give half of their goods to the poor. A wise government, guided by free councils, would have interfered sooner to put a check to this, lest it should encourage too many to eat the bread of idleness, living on the alms of the monasteries, when they were able to profit the state by honest industry. As it was, it went on without a check from the reign of the Conqueror to that of Edward I.—more than two hundred years; till about one-fifth of the land of the kingdom was in the possession of the monasteries.[1] At this period, king John having set the first example, the kings began to make that sort of agreement with the pope, which lasted about three hundred years longer, exercising such rights as the pope allowed over the Church, and dividing with him the taxes which were laid on the Church's inheritance. The more able kings, as Edward I. and Henry VII., kept the pope's share low; but in the time of weak kings, as Henry III., or those who had no good title, as Henry IV., the abuses of this usurpation were multiplied. The sum

[1] H. Wharton, *Remarks on Burnet*, p. 40. Bp. Burnet says, "the *best part* of the soil of the kingdom was in such ill hands." Pref. pt. ii. p. xii. If he means the *best-cultivated* part, this is true; for the monks took much better care of their lands than the Norman barons. If he means that they had more than half the soil, it is one of the foolish tales which this credulous writer was much too ready to believe.

annually paid for Peter-pence had been restored by William Rufus; but nothing more was sent out of the country till king John had opened the road to all kinds of exaction.

The lesson to be learnt from this surrender of the liberties of Church and State, is one which every Englishman may read in the causes in which it began. HAD THE SOVEREIGNS LEFT THE CHURCH HER FREEDOM, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO POPERY. There can be no revival of popery in England while the Church is free: but if wicked governors seize on the Church's goods, destroy her bishoprics, or give them to false teachers and unworthy men—attempt, as the apostate Julian did, to deprive her of the power of educating her own children,—and if the people love to have it so,—it can only end in the exaltation of some power, which will defile the altar and cast down the throne. Let the Church be secured by the state in those rights which the law of Christ has given her—let her be free, as other institutions are free, enjoying her property under the protection of equal laws,—and the state and nation that so protect her, in her freedom will secure their own.

There were many other causes which helped on the encroachments of the pope, besides this chief and greatest one. There were many ways in which his authority was brought in, secretly at first and unsuspected, till it was too late to apply a remedy. It was begun and fostered within the Church itself by introducing the *Dissenting Principle*. The different orders of monks, canons, and friars, were all, in fact, so many sects, each collecting a body of partisans of their own, and withdrawing themselves from the control of the bishop. No doubt the bishops appointed by the Norman kings were often of such a character, that it was difficult for the monks to live at peace

under them; so that there were faults on both sides. But the love of power on the part of the great abbots urged them on the more eagerly in that ruinous course, which was the occasion of their great overthrow in Henry VIII.'s time. The first abbey which was exempted from the jurisdiction of the bishop was Battle Abbey, founded by the Conqueror, and privileged in this extraordinary manner by his charter. From this example others were led either to purchase the same privilege at Rome, or, what was in these bad times no uncommon thing, to forge old charters, pretending to give their abbeys such privileges at some period before the Conquest. Thus the popes began to establish an interest for themselves by a means which they have ever since employed (through the begging friars, when the monks were not obedient, and when the begging friars were become unserviceable, by the Jesuits), by setting up dissenting societies to oppose the rightful authority of the bishops.

The first order which seems to have attempted to gain this exemption was the order of Cluniac monks; but before the time of Gregory VII. it was not so easy to find bishops willing to allow it. At a council of French bishops held at Ause, near Lyons, A.D. 1025, it was resolved that the privilege granted to the Cluniacs, taking them out of the jurisdiction of their bishops, was not valid; for it was not according to the old laws of the Church, and particularly it was contrary to the fourth canon of the council of Chalcedon, one of the early councils whose authority is acknowledged in every Christian Church.[2] These monks, however, did not lose sight of the advantage

[2] See Mr. Palmer's Ecclesiastical History, chap. vii. p. 70. The canon runs thus: "It is decreed, that no man shall any where build or establish a monastery or house of prayer without the consent of the bishop of the city or province; and that

to be gained to their sect by it; and when it was once established, the abbot of Clugny became a powerful head of a large body of dissenters in Christendom. Though their houses in England were few, their property was large: they had the great tithes of many livings settled upon them; and being chiefly foreigners, they had no interest in leaving a fair portion to the English parish-priest. The pope found them very useful allies in England and other places

The old Benedictine abbeys, founded by Dunstan's friends, were induced often to seek this privilege, by the trouble which the Norman bishops gave them. As long as the bishops were monks of their own order, the monks and they, in the cathedral towns, agreed well enough; but when they came to be secular priests, or canons, or of any other order, they were often at variance: for the bishop in the cathedral city, according to Dunstan's plan, was to be abbot of his own monastery; but when this could no longer be, there was to be a division of the revenues; and this occasioned disputes. There was sad work at Canterbury in Richard I.'s time or just before, when Baldwin, an Englishman, born at Exeter, and of the Cistercian order, was made archbishop of Canterbury. He tried in every way he could to destroy the exemption of the abbot and monks of St. Augustine's, but the popes Urban III. and Clement III. effectually prevented him. This prelate was in great esteem with the clergy who were not monks; and, as he afterwards accompanied Richard on his crusade, was the means of doing some good in restraining the disorders and relieving the wants of the English soldiery. He is one of the first bishops

the monks in each city or province shall be subject to the bishop, and love peace and quietness, and apply themselves to fasting and prayer, in those places in which they have renounced the world." A.D. 451.

after the Conquest who is mentioned as having been a preacher; the majority of them being still Normans, who could not speak English, as William de Longchamp, bishop of Ely, whom Richard left to govern England in his absence.

It appears, indeed, that the Cistercians were an order of a more English feeling, and more disposed to respect the authorities of the Church. Their great teacher, St. Bernard, in his lifetime, was very zealous to keep his monks in obedience to their bishops, and wrote very indignantly to some abbots who had applied for exemptions and higher dignities. "What new presumption is this," he says, "to withdraw from the obedience you have promised? Are you not still monks, though you are abbots? Though you are set over monks, this does not make you cease to be monks yourselves. But you say, We do not seek it for ourselves; we only desire the liberty of our church. O liberty, more slavish than any slavery! God preserve me from such a liberty, which would make me only the miserable slave of pride! For I am well assured, that if ever I pretend to shake off the yoke of my bishop, I shall put myself under the yoke of Satan. If I had a hundred spiritual pastors, how should I fare the worse? Should I not be led the more securely in the green pastures, and fed by the waters of comfort? Amazing folly! that a man should have no fear when he assembles a great number of souls to guard them, and that he should be offended at the thought of having one guardian to watch over his own!" There cannot be a more touching rebuke to the pride which lurks at the bottom of the Dissenting Principle.

Meantime the remedy which these abbeys had sought was soon proved to be worse than the grievance which occasioned it. The pope sent his legates and proctors into England, and those who

had received the most of his protection were to pay the most dearly for it. The great abbots were to go to Rome for investiture, and were not to go empty-handed. The Benedictines, being the richest, were to be visited by persons deputed from other orders; and these, armed with their brief authority, did nothing to favour those whom they looked upon as rivals. Still, matters went on tolerably till the begging friars arose; and these light artillery of the pope were shortly employed on all his services.

The Begging Friars began in the days of king John and pope Innocent III. Their two principal sects were the Dominicans, or Preaching Friars, and the Franciscans, or Minorites. But there were also two others, which had some favour in England — the Carmelites and Austin Friars. Their profession was to live on alms, to possess neither houses nor lands, but to travel, and abide in any house to which they were bidden, like the seventy disciples. In fact, they never did possess large landed estates in England, though they soon abated the rigour of their rules as to holding houses. They were not long without splendid houses in London, in Oxford, Bristol, York, and other places in town and country. The popes gave them the privilege of going where they pleased, and preaching or administering the sacraments to whom they pleased; to hear confessions from any who chose to confess to them; and to hold schools and teach wherever they might be able to assemble scholars. Thus they could come into the domain of any monastery, or fix themselves in any parish, without leave of bishop, abbot, or priest. They were suddenly raised to the greatest popular esteem; so that, as a Benedictine monk[3] of

[3] Matt. Paris.

the time complains, the monasteries did not in three or four hundred years obtain such a height of greatness as the friars—minors and preachers—within twenty-four years after they began to build their first house in England. They were soon able to raise costly edifices, and to spend immense treasures. They were sent for to attend nobles and rich men at the point of death, whom fear or an evil conscience prevented from sending for their parish-priest, or ordinary religious adviser; and thus, often influencing the making of their wills, they took care to recommend their own order to charitable consideration. They were as well received by the common people, to whom they preached, like Whitefield, in the streets or fields; and in contempt of the pomp and dignity of the altars in abbey-churches, they carried about a small stone altar, which they set up on a wooden table, and so administered the communion. Such was the beginning of what is now called the *Voluntary Principle.*

Francis of Assisi, an Italian, and Dominic Guzman, a Spaniard, were the founders of the two principal orders of begging friars. They were both famous preachers. Francis preached constantly on Lord's days and festivals, in parish-churches where they admitted him, or else in conventicles of his disciples. His sermons are said to have been short and impressive; and he himself seems to have been a man of simple mind and sincere piety. Dominic's character as a preacher was to introduce pithy stories, something in the way of Rowland Hill, but with still less, probably, of gravity or reverence. His disciples imitated his practice; and if we may trust the account of an Italian religious poet, who lived in the same century with Dominic, their artifices by such means to catch the applause of their hearers were paltry enough.

Christ said not to the convent of his twelve,
"Go forth, and preach buffooneries to the world;"
But gave them truth to build on; and the sound
Was mightier on their lips than shield or spear.
The preacher now provides himself with store
Of jests and gibes; and if his hearers laugh,
His big cowl swells with pride, and all goes right.
But such a *dark bird* nestles in his hood,
That, could the vulgar see it where it sits,
They scarce would wait to hear the pardon said,
Which now the dotards hold in such esteem.

This, which the poet mentions, was one chief errand of the Preaching Friars, to sell the pope's pardons, which were first given to those who chose to pay a price to be quit of their vow to go on a crusade. And where the friars established schools or gave lectures, they aimed rather to teach the canon law, set up by the popes against the common law of the different countries in Christendom, than to advance the knowledge of Scripture or any useful science. This the same poet justly complains of:—

The accursed love of coin
Hath driven from the fold both sheep and lambs,
The shepherd turn'd into a wolf. For this,
The Gospel and great teachers laid aside,
The decretals,[4] as their stuff'd margins shew,
Are the sole study: pope and cardinals,
All bent on these, think not of Nazareth,
Where Gabriel lighted down on golden wing.

What they did teach, however, in explanation of the Scriptures was too often a corruption of the truth, and beguiled men from the simplicity of faith into disputes of words and strange or impious fancies. Their chief doctors were called schoolmen. Of these there were many eminent men; particularly Thomas of Aquino, a Dominican, and Bonaventura, a Fran-

[4] The name of a portion of the canon law.

ciscan, who both lived about A.D. 1250. The first, however, by his subtle refinements, much injured the doctrine of grace; the other was given to a superstitious veneration, which now very widely prevailed, of the blessed Virgin Mary.[5] They reached their highest degree of favour in England in the reign of Edward I., when two Franciscan friars, Robert Kilwarby and John Peckham, were each in turn archbishops of Canterbury, and this king's private confessor was Thomas Joyce, a Dominican, who, as well as Kilwarby, was made a cardinal. The following may serve as a specimen of what he preached before the king:

"The philosopher commends the wisdom of a bird, which knowing itself weak and unable to defend its young, lays them among the young of another brood. So ought we to do. Our young are our works. Since, therefore, we are weak in doing good works—nay, most weak, for as the apostle says, *we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves;* we cannot defend our works against our enemies. Let us then place our good works among the works of Christ; that is, let us ascribe to him whatever good there is in our works, as it is written in Isaiah, *Lord, thou hast wrought all our works in us.*"

Such language proves that, though the doctrine

[5] There is a common story of these two doctors, that, as they were once both entertained at the king of France's table, Thomas sat studying some deep argument that was then in his mind, and at last exclaimed, "I have it; the Manichæans are heretics, and clearly in the wrong." Bonaventura gazed reverentially at the countenance of the queen, till the king asked him what his thoughts were. "O sire," he said, "if an earthly queen is so beautiful, what must be the beauty of the queen of heaven!" If this is true, it shews who was the best politician, and may account, in some degree, for the popularity of the Franciscans with the ladies.

of grace was not yet denied, it was endangered and disgraced by mean comparisons. It ought to be a warning to us, how we listen to such preaching, which, professing to explain heavenly mysteries in familiar language, in fact destroys their heavenly nature, and puts only an unseemly fancy in their place.

Yet, as it is the way of a gracious Providence to bring good out of evil, the unprofitable or mischievous learning of these friars led the way to something better. They set up schools at their convents in Oxford and Cambridge, and, as they were really zealous in teaching, and took a more popular way of conveying instruction than had been known before, their schools were the means of drawing many students to the universities. It is surprising what a great number of poor scholars there were in those days, who flocked together from Ireland and Wales, as well as from all parts of England. The English, whose language had been almost banished by the Normans from churches, courts of law, and schools, now began to acquire more instruction; and the different classes of society were brought nearer together by these teachers, who knew how to make themselves acceptable to high and low. The Normans began to learn English, and the Saxons to mix up their old language with Norman-French words; and from this union our native speech has gained something of the polish of old classical phrase, without losing its German simplicity and strength. John Peckham, already mentioned, when raised to the primacy, A.D. 1279, became a very praiseworthy reformer of church-discipline; and particularly, finding a Norman bishop of Lichfield who could not speak English, and would not reside on his see, he obliged him to appoint a coadjutor-bishop, to whom he was to pay a good salary for doing his

duty. This is the last instance to be found of an abuse, which was thus put down about two hundred years after it began with the Conquest.

The Dominicans having touched the pride of the monks, by expressing contempt for their neglect of learning, this also led to good. They told the Benedictines, they were living the life of fat citizens, proud of their wealth, and too fond of good cheer. As to the Cistercians, they were poor clowns and farmers, living like country bumpkins rather than learned clerks. The monks accused them in turn of being intriguers, match-makers, proctors of the pope's exactions, and flatterers of the rich for gain. In both which charges there was some truth. But the jealousy of the monks, and indeed the danger which threatened them, led them also to found halls or schools at the universities, and to send pupils to study there from the monastery-schools. By degrees, from this time, both learning and religion began to flourish at Oxford and Cambridge. ROGER BACON, a Franciscan friar, A.D. 1284, was the first adventurer in experimental science; and WYCLIFFE became the forerunner of the Reformation.

But when the abject wickedness of king John had destroyed at once the liberty of his crown and of the Church, misrule and errors of all kinds were multiplied. The pope had no need any longer to observe moderation or discretion in his demands; and in the reign of Henry III., the two popes, Gregory IX. and Innocent IV., carried on a system of levying contributions to an extent which seems almost incredible. They sent over orders to the archbishops and bishops (Walter Gray, archbishop of York, was one of the most complying), to give their best preferments to persons named by themselves. Gregory is said in one letter to have demanded no fewer than three hundred benefices: and the per-

sons sent to fill them were Italians or Romans. His legate, Otho, had before demanded two prebends in every cathedral, and two monks' portions in every monastery, as an acknowledgment in place of all fees at Rome. Then came a demand of the tenth of the annual income of all benefices. Then, a few years afterwards, no less than a fifth, to help this pope in a war against the German emperor. Innocent IV. sent an order, that if any clergyman died without making a will, the pope should have his property. And he is said to have occasioned so many foreigners to be sent over into England, and obtained them such good preferment, that their yearly receipts amounted to seventy thousand marks; more than the king then received from his own estates. The cause that these popes succeeded so wonderfully well was, that Henry III., a weak prince, considered himself to be in danger from his barons, and could see no safety but under the pope's shadow. Wherefore he was always glad to have a legate residing in the country, and did every thing to support him in his taxations; though it was commonly said that Otho carried off more bullion than he left within the realm.

It may be asked, how the barons, bishops, and clergymen themselves, behaved under all these grievances, when the king pillaged them by his ministers, and the pope by his legate, both without right or law. There were many signs of the smothered fire, before it broke out into the barons' war; but the change of an unpopular minister from time to time, and the king's good-natured weakness, disarmed the stubbornness of opposition. There was, however, a secret society formed for the expulsion of the foreign churchmen, A.D. 1231. This club sent out a number of letters to different bishops, abbots, and the clergy of the cathedrals, telling them

not to admit the Italians, and signing themselves, "the company of those who had rather die *than be confounded by the Romans.*" The letters were sealed with a seal bearing the device of two swords; and threatened vengeance if what they ordered was not obeyed. Armed bodies of men were sent to empty the granaries of the Roman clergymen; it was done in form and order; they sold to those who chose to buy, and gave the rest to the poor. Walter de Cantilupe, a baron's son, and bishop of Worcester, appears to have been a member of this society; to which also belonged several of the noblemen, gentlemen, sheriffs of counties, archdeacons, deans, and other clergy. Robert Twing, a young military man, was the chief leader in these disorders, which it appears were connived at by the magistrates. The king, finding that he was only the agent of others whom he was afraid of, did not punish him; but as the pope had complained, told him to go to Rome to clear himself. The barons sent after him a letter of remonstrance to the pope; and the pope, finding it best to be civil, wrote a complimentary answer, and carried it no further.

There were other gentler spirits, who took another way to resist these corrupt encroachments. It appears that the parish-priests in many parts of the country met together, to protest against the pope's proceedings; and there is good sense and intelligence, together with good Christian feeling, in the following declaration of the clergy of Berkshire, A.D. 1240:—

"The rectors of churches in Bereshyre, all and each, say thus: First, that it is not lawful to contribute money to support a war against the emperor; for though the pope has excommunicated him, he has not been convicted or condemned as a heretic by any sentence of the Church. And if he has seized

or invaded the estates of the Church of Rome, still it is not lawful for the Church to resist force by force.

"Secondly, that as the Roman Church has its own estates, the management of which belongs to the lord pope, so have other Churches theirs, granted them by gift and allowance of pious kings, princes, and noblemen; which are in no respect liable to pay tax or tribute to the Church of Rome.

"Thirdly, although the law says, All things belong to the prince, this does not mean that they are part of his property and domain, but are under his care and charge: and in like manner the churches belong to the lord pope as to care and charge, not as to dominion and property. And when Christ said, *Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my Church*, he committed only the charge, and not the property, to Peter; as is plain from the following words, *Whatsoever thou shalt bind and loose upon earth shall be bound or loosed in heaven:* not, Whatever thou shalt exact on earth shall be exacted in heaven.

"Fourthly, inasmuch as it is plain from the authority of the fathers, that the income of churches is appointed for certain uses, as for the church, the ministers, and the poor, it ought not to be turned to other uses but by the authority of the whole Church. Least of all ought the goods of the Church to be taken to maintain war against Christians.

"Fifthly, that the king and nobles of England, by inheritance and good custom, have the right of patronage over the churches of England; and the rectors, holding livings under their patronage, cannot admit a custom hurtful to their property without their leave.

"Sixthly, that churches were endowed that rectors might afford hospitality to rich and poor according to their means; and if the intention of

patrons is thus frustrated, they will not in future build or found churches, or be willing to give away livings.

"Seventhly, that the pope promised when he first asked for a contribution, never to repeat his demand: and that as a repeated act makes a custom, this second contribution will be drawn into an unusual and slavish precedent."

These reasons and a few more, prove that there was by no means a general consent on the part of the Church of England to the tithing and tolling of the pope; on the contrary, that there were those who would with prudence and firmness have supported the liberty of the Church, had not the weakness of the king and his ministers, who were many of them foreigners, betrayed them. Other proofs of the same determination will be seen in one or two eminent characters, whom we shall have occasion to mention in the closing chapter. It is now the place briefly to mention a few of the evils which were thus fastened on the Church.

First, the practice of excommunication, or, as our forefathers called it, in plain English, cursing, whomsoever it pleased the pope to curse. Becket was unjustifiable in carrying this so far as he did; but the popes now made it a kind of custom to lay a whole realm under an interdict or curse, putting a stop to all religious services, except baptising, or burying the dead. Pope Innocent III. began this, laying an interdict on the realm of England, A.D. 1208, in order to gain his point with king John. The legate cardinal Gualo, A.D. 1218, did the same to all Scotland. It was as bad for the clergy as for the laymen at the time this curse was laid on; besides that, while it lasted, the people paid them no tithes or offerings, and they were never set free without a sum of money. The poor Scots came down

from the north, and had very little to give, while they knelt, with bare head and foot and shanks, before the legate's deputy, or pope's gentleman's gentleman, to receive absolution. And this tyrannous custom became so common, that pope Clement IV. and other popes, in granting a privilege to any favoured monastery, made it an article, that whenever there should be a general interdict, they might shut their church-doors, and taking care to shut out the excommunicated, and not ringing the church-bells, might celebrate divine service by themselves. Some more gentle-spirited monks took advantage of this permission to set up an inner door of glass, which they kept shut, and the poor interdicted people could thus come into the nave of the abbey-church, and see from without what was going on in the choir, as well as hear; but this kindness occasioned another prohibition. At length this cursing naturally lost all effect; and the common people, dressing up a mock bishop or priest, brought him into the streets, and giving him a tallow-candle or lighted wisp of straw in an earthen pipkin, he turned it over and put it out, pronouncing the same curse against the excommunicators as they had pronounced in the pope's name.

The stories of false miracles, all tending to the undue honour of dead saints, also were multiplied. And such stories, though the monks had done something in this way, were more especially the invention of the begging friars. There was an old superstitious belief on this subject, as is shewn by some very simple stories in Bede; particularly one of a sick horse, which was said to have recovered wonderfully by rolling itself over the place where king Oswald died in battle. The poor animal most likely had a fit of the staggers; and his rider, who had never seen any thing of the sort, was surprised, and

in his piety, knowing nothing of second causes thought only of the First Great Cause, and interpreted it, according to the belief of his time, as a sign that God had taken king Oswald to a state of bliss.[6] Again, about the time of William the Conqueror, a belief of the same kind was still commonly prevalent, as may be seen in a wild story told in the Chronicle of the Cid, the Spanish hero; how his body was wonderfully supported on horseback after death, and the Moors were put to flight by the view of it; and how he gave a box on the ear to a Jew, who came to feel his chin when he was laid out on his bier in the cathedral at Valentia. Perhaps such things were believed, as a schoolboy now believes a ghost-story, half incredulous, and half afraid. The following extract from the Chronicle, or a ballad of the time, may serve to shew how it was:

Quantos dicen mal del Cid.

Bad tongues that rail against the Cid shall spend their spite in vain,
For a noble knight he was in fight, and the best good lance of Spain.
True servant to his king he was, and the champion of his land;
A foe to traitors, to true men he gave both heart and hand;
And in his life and in his death did earn immortal praise,
Whate'er ill-temper'd rhymers say in these unfaithful days.
Says one, "The deeds they tell of him are but an idle tale:
Away with old wives' fables; let simple sooth prevail."
If folks deny your principle, philosophers agree
There is no room for argument; and this my rule shall be.
For why? it is but ignorance that makes the man deny
And quarrel with true history, because he loves to lie.
High deeds are not for his poor creed: "Let fools," says he, "believe,
That the Cid, when dead, great victories in battle did achieve."
As if it were impossible, or any way too hard,
For him, whom living or in death the blessed saints did guard!

[6] This story is mentioned, because it is particularly selected for the scorn of the unbelieving historian David Hume.

"How may it stand for truth," he says, "that his sword half-drawn he rear d,
When to his corpse the false Jew stole to pluck him by the beard?"
Dull heretic, as far from wit as thou art far from grace!
What! shall not Heaven regard its own, to shield them from disgrace?
The laws of knighthood, in such case, no more might nerve his arm;
But the law of faith, for which he fought, would keep him aye from harm!

This ballad may be taken as a record of the times of which we write. It would seem that there were, before the false legends began, some who had not much faith for such things; but it was plainly held more religious to believe them. "The superstition of the day supposed the glorified saints to know what was going on in the world," says an excellent writer on this subject,[7] "and to feel a deep interest and possess a considerable power in the Church on earth. I believe that they who thought so were altogether mistaken; and I lament and abhor and am amazed at the superstitions, blasphemies, and idolatries, which have grown out of that opinion: but as to the notion itself, I do not know that it was wicked; and I almost envy those, whose credulous simplicity so realised the communion of saints, and the period when the whole family in heaven and earth shall be gathered into one." Such is the right estimate to be made of the belief of Bede and the simpler olden time. But the case was altered, when the poor ignorant people were taught to come to our Lady of Walsingham, or to Becket's shrine, for the health of their souls and bodies; and when one saint's miracles were set out against another's to draw gifts to churches and altars, and prayer to these was taught so as to throw into the shade the

[7] Letters on the Dark Ages, no. v.

true One Mediator between God and man. And when men have begun to practise such deceits on others or on themselves, persecution follows next; they punish in others a denial of what they scarcely themselves believe, and hate a faith which seems purer or more earnest than their own. Still, amidst these errors and crimes, the light was not extinguished; and it will now be our more grateful task to point out a few in whose breasts it burnt brightly to the end.

CHAPTER XX.

GOOD MEN IN EVIL TIMES. ROBERT GROSTÊTE, BP. OF LINCOLN, AND HIS FRIENDS. PIOUS FOUNDERS OF CHURCHES AND COLLEGES. TYRANNY OF HENRY VIII. CONCLUSION.

> Yet, in that throng of selfish hearts untrue,
> Thy sad eye rests upon thy faithful few;
> Pause where we may upon the desert road,
> Some shelter is in sight, some sacred safe abode.
>
> *The Christian Year*

GROSTETE, or Greathead, bishop of Lincoln, was born at Stradbrook in Suffolk. He studied at Oxford, and also at Paris, which was a famous seat of learning in the middle ages. He then returned to Oxford, and was a tutor or master in the Franciscan school there. He took holy orders from the bishop, and became rector of St. Margaret's, Leicester, and was soon afterwards made archdeacon. He was an intimate friend of Simon de Montfort, the famous earl of Leicester, who afterwards unfortunately was led by too daring an ambition to make war against his sovereign. In A.D. 1235 Grostête was elected bishop of Lincoln. On his coming to his see, which then took in a wide extent of nine or ten counties, he found the country-churches in many places left without a proper maintenance for the parish-priests, the tithes having been improperly given to the monasteries, who were to

provide a vicar to do the duty. He made a diligent visitation of his diocese, and compelled the monasteries to give a more fitting allowance to the vicars. In some places, it seems, they sent over only a monk to do the duty on Sundays. Finding also that the privileges given by the popes to the monasteries, and even to the nunneries, led to many abuses, he determined, in spite of the exemptions which had been granted against the proper rights of bishops, to put them to a strict visitation. In this he met with great difficulties. In the beginning of his efforts for reform he had some support from pope Innocent IV., whom he had known in his youth; but either his love of money, or his necessities (for he was at war with the Italian states), drove him, for filthy lucre's sake, to take part with the privileged orders. At last, having summoned all the abbots, priors, and other religious superiors, to a synod at Leicester, and finding that many Templars, Hospitalers, and others, had appealed to the pope, he went himself to Rome to accuse the pontiff to his face of not acting up to his own letters and promises. "Be content," said pope Innocent; "you have delivered your own soul by your protest; but if I please to shew grace to these persons, what is that to you?" The bishop returned to England; and finding how little trust was to be placed in Roman honour, began to act on his own authority.

He had before summoned the abbot of the Benedictines at Bardney to attend at one of his courts of law, to answer to a suit for debt, which a clergyman brought against him. The popedom was then vacant, and the abbot tried to escape trial at his court by applying to the prior of Christ-church, Canterbury, who was, by the constitution of the former pope, at the head of the exempt houses, or dissenting interest, of the Benedictine order. The

bishop knew that this step was not approved by all the abbots in his diocese; and sending for those of Ramsey, Peterborough, Wareham, and other places, to a synod at Hertford, he laid the case before them. These honest abbots declared that their brother of Bardney was guilty of contumacy, and ought to be deposed. But the prior and monks of Canterbury, calling together fifty priests, most likely from their own livings, and putting fifty monks to hold a synod with them, excommunicated Grostête. There was at this time for three years no archbishop at Canterbury; so that these insolent monks had it all their own way. When one of them delivered the letter of excommunication to Grostête, he trod it under foot, and said with some contempt, "Tell those who sent you that such curses are the only prayers I beg from them for ever."

He deposed the abbot of Peterborough afterwards, for having wasted the property of his monastery in order to enrich his relations. Such abuses were likely to be fostered by the pope's exemptions. He then, in defiance of these irregular privileges, visited every religious house in his diocese, and made strict inquiry into every case where either man or woman was suspected of not living according to the rule, or of having broken their vows.

He was very much disposed, at first, to favour the Begging Friars; but when he saw them riding about the country in boots and spurs, collecting the pope's taxes, his eyes were open to their fraudulent pretences.

His independent spirit, and bold determination to do his duty, often led him to oppose the king and his ministers. Henry III. acted as might be expected from so weak a character in disposing of his preferment. He had a chaplain, who was a half-witted sort of jester, with whom Matthew Paris

saw him and his brother-in-law amusing themselves in the monastery-garden at St. Alban's, pelting each other with turfs and raw fruit. Was such a man fit to have the cure of souls? Grostête complained of this. He prevented also another king's chaplain from holding a second living in his diocese. On this occasion, as the king yielded to his remonstrances, he took the opportunity, as he preached before him, to praise his sense of justice. "A king's righteousness," he said, "when he rules according to the laws, is like the sun's beams, shining equally on all." But when, a few years later, the pope and king had made an iniquitous bargain, that the pope should give him a tenth of all the Church's property for three years, under pretence of a crusade, and the other prelates were in a strait, not knowing what to do, Grostête said to the king's ministers, "Marry, what is this? Do you think we shall submit to this hateful exaction? God forbid!" Ethelmar, the king's brother-in-law, who had been elected to the see of Winchester, but was too young to be consecrated, said to him, "Father, how can we resist the pope and king together? The French have consented to such a contribution, and they are stronger than we; they are more used to resist; and yet they contributed to aid their king, when he was going, as ours is, on a crusade." "If they have contributed," rejoined Grostête, "we have the more reason to resist. For we see too well what has been the end of this extortion with the king of the French.[1] The money that he has exacted from his own kingdom he has had to pay to ransom his own person from the captivity of the Saracens. That we may not, like him, incur with our king the heavy wrath of God, I give my voice freely

[1] St. Louis, or Louis IX.

against this injurious tax." Yet he offered, if the king would allow this tax to be disposed of, when collected, according to the advice of his faithful barons, to give his consent to it; provided the liberty of the Church from all extraordinary taxes were also secured under a new charter. But this being refused, the council was adjourned without deciding any thing. It is plain that this good prelate's eyes were opened to the false principles which had wasted so much blood and treasure on the crusades.

He was suspended by Innocent, at length, for refusing to give a rich benefice to an Italian. But his character was too high for such a sentence, even from the pope, to take effect. He continued to preach and rule his diocese; and sent a letter of remonstrance to Rome, which is said to have run in these terms: "Let your wisdom be assured, that I obey all apostolic commands devoutly and reverently, with the love and duty of a son; but those which are contrary to apostolic, in zeal for your honour as for a father's, I withstand and oppose. For by divine command I am bound to do both. For apostolic commands are not and cannot be other than such as are agreeable to the doctrine of the apostles, and of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, the Master and Lord of the apostles; whose character and person, in the sacred government of the Church, my lord the pope most especially bears. For our Lord Jesus Christ himself says, *He that is not with me is against me.* But the divine holiness of the apostolic see is not and cannot be against Christ.

"Now the letter which I have received is not agreeable to apostolic holiness, but most contrary to it. First, because the clause, which this and other letters sent into this realm contain, that I am to do

what it commands, notwithstanding all law and privilege to the contrary, is against all natural equity; and, if this is once allowed, it will let in a flood of promise-breaking, bold injustice, and wanton insult, deceit, and mutual distrust; and after them a train of innumerable crimes, to the defilement of pure religion, and disturbance of the peace of society. Next, because there cannot be a sin more opposed to the doctrine of the apostles and evangelists, or more odious to Christ, than to kill and destroy souls, by depriving them of the pastoral office and ministry; a crime which they are plainly guilty of, who take the milk and fleece of the flock of Christ, but neglect to lead their charge into the pastures of life and health. Not to administer the pastoral duties is, by the testimony of Scripture, to ruin and destroy the flock.

"As in good things, the cause of good is better than the good of which it is the cause, so in evils, the cause is worse than the evil which it brings. They who bring in these destructive practices betray a high and divine power, given them for edification, not for destruction. It is impossible, therefore, that the holy apostolic see, put in charge as it is by Christ Jesus the Lord of saints, can command any thing that tends to a crime so hateful. For it would be a manifest treason to Christ, and a foul abuse of the high and holy power which belongs to that see,—a choice of darkness rather than light, and a seeking of banishment from the throne of the Lord's glory. Nor can any one with pure and sincere obedience obey such commands or precepts, or instructions of whatever kind, coming from whom they may, even though they were given by an archangel; but he must needs with all his might oppose and withstand them.

"In short, the holy apostolic see has power to

do only those things which are for edification, not those which are for destruction. And why should it desire more? For this is in truth, and this only, the fulness of power, to be able to do all things for edification. But these things, sent over to this realm under the name of *provisions*, are not for the edification, but for the destruction of souls. The holy apostolic see, therefore, cannot allow them. *It is flesh and blood which hath revealed them, and not the Father of our Lord who is in heaven.*

"For these reasons, most reverend lord," he says in the conclusion of his letter, "since the commands I have received are so contrary to the holiness of the apostolic see, destructive to the souls of men, and against the catholic faith,—the very spirit of unity, the love of a son, and the obedience of a subject, command me to rebel."

Not long after he had penned this remarkable letter, he was seized with his last illness. The sufferings of the Church, under what was then a new tyranny, were the subject of his latest thoughts; and he spoke of the extortions and abuses, the cheating pretences and broken promises of the Italian pontiff, with such pointed words as shewed how deeply he felt the evils which he deplored. He spoke also of the employment of the Begging Friars in the pope's merchandises with becoming indignation,—as persons who, after renouncing the world under a vow of poverty, had become more entirely busied in worldly business than before; and he ended with the prophetic words, "The Church will never be set free from this Egyptian bondage, but by the edge of a blood-stained sword!"

Bishop Grostête was, as might be expected from his own superior acquirements, a great promoter of religious learning, preaching diligently himself, and requiring the same from his clergy. He gave sup-

port to many poor scholars at the university, and wrote himself many treatises on sacred subjects, in English and Latin. He had many eminent friends in high stations in the Church, one of whom was EDMUND, archbishop of Canterbury, who strove for some time to bring the king to better counsels; but at length finding no success, and being unwilling to witness evils which he could not remedy, retired and died under a discipline of severe self-denial at Pontigny, the place of Becket's retirement in France.

Among the friends of Grostête was also SEWELL, archbishop of York, who had been dean of that church. On his election, A.D. 1256, pope Alexander IV. gave the deanery to one Giordano, an Italian who could not speak a word of English, and sent him to gain possession as he might. The manner was curious. Three strangers came into York minster at noon, when the citizens and clergy were at dinner, and inquired of a person praying there alone, which was the dean's stall. On being shewn it, the two said to the third, "Brother, we install you by the authority of the pope." When the proceeding came to the ear of the archbishop, he pronounced the appointment invalid; for which when the Italians returned to Rome, he was laid under an interdict, and put to immense expense and trouble. When the pope afterwards sent some more Italians for preferment, Sewell refused to admit the strangers into his diocese. Giordano, finding himself ill at ease, gave up the deanery for a pension of a hundred marks. But the pope was so enraged against Sewell, that, having already suspended him, and ordered the silver cross which was carried before archbishops to be taken from him, he now excommunicated him; all which the holy prelate bore with a patience befitting a disciple and friend of Edmund of Canterbury and of Grostête. The more he was cursed

by the pope, the more he was blessed by the people, but secretly, for fear of the Romans. He wrote shortly before his death a very humble and respectful remonstrance to the pope, not yielding the points at issue, but maintaining his own integrity in refusing to prefer his nominees. He died under sentence of excommunication, but the people crowded to his funeral, and honoured his tomb. There are many who are martyrs, says Matthew Paris, like St. John the Evangelist, without shedding their blood.

A third of the friends of Grostête was RICHARD, bishop of Chichester, a man of the greatest piety and charity.[2] It is remarkable that the influence of these good men was so great with the barons of England, that even after they had been defeated at Evesham, a party who held out at Ely, A.D. 1267, still endeavoured to stipulate for the terms which Grostête had required in the council. They refused to allow the king a tax of three years' tenths on benefices for a crusade: "The war," they said, "was begun through these unjust exactions. It is time to cease from them, and consult for the peace of the realm." When they were now excommunicated by the pope, and outlawed by the king, and were summoned to return to their faith and allegiance, their answer was, "That they firmly hold the same faith which they have learned from the holy bishops, St. Robert, St. Edmund, and St. Richard (Grostête, Edmund of Canterbury, and Richard of Chichester,) and other catholic men; that they believe and hold the articles of faith as they are contained in the creed and in the gospel, and the sacraments of the Church; and for this faith they are prepared to live or die. That they acknowledge obedience to the

[2] See an account of him in Palmer's Church History, p. 201.

Church of Rome as the head of all Christendom; but not to the avarice and exactions of those who ought to govern it, but do not." These brave men were soon after defeated and dispersed by prince Edward. Though they were mistaken in taking up arms, it is impossible not to respect their high principles, and the cause for which they stood. And it is plain that had there been wisdom in Henry III., or moderation in his son Edward, the deliverance of the Church would have been accomplished two centuries earlier than the period of the Reformation.

The pope's power was indeed effectually checked by the wise laws of Edward I.; but he was content to secure the dignity of his crown, without regard to the improvement of the state of doctrine in the Church, having no knowledge of the need. The supremacy of the pope was not touched by these laws; and thus there was no means of reforming the most important corruptions, unless the reformation began at Rome. The Church, however, continued from this time without those shameful invasions of its property, which had been going on from the reign of Rufus to Henry III. It was taxed for the king under his own laws.

From this time the building of monasteries declined. The laws rightly restrained persons from giving more lands, or settling further annual fees upon them. Charitable people still founded friaries; but, what was better, the more enlightened Christian statesmen and bishops began to found colleges at Oxford and Cambridge. WALTER DE MERTON, bishop of Rochester, and lord chancellor, founded Merton College in Edward I.'s reign. He was a contemporary of HUGH DE BALSHAM, the founder of Peterhouse, Cambridge. These are the two oldest foundations, as they now remain at the two Universities. They were followed by many other pious

founders, particularly WALTER STAPLETON, bishop of Exeter, and founder of Exeter College; a good and upright statesman, who was murdered by the rebels in Edward II.'s reign; WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM, the founder of New College and Winchester College and School, in Edward III.'s reign, and the architect who built Windsor Castle; and WILLIAM OF WAINFLEET, who was a good and charitable man in more dangerous times, but, doing his duty and fearing God, was preserved in safety, and was able to found Magdalen College, in the midst of the wars of York and Lancaster. Nor should we omit to mention one of the latest yet most excellent of the list, the LADY MARGARET, countess of Richmond and Derby, and mother to king Henry VII., a great benefactress to both Universities, and foundress of St. John's College, Cambridge. She was a rare example of devotion and charity in the highest rank, giving not only her wealth, but her time and personal attention to the sick and the distressed, often watching by a poor person's dying bed, that by such experience she might learn to die.[3] From the colleges so founded came forth those enlightened Christian men, who, studying Scripture by the help of the writers of the primitive Church, were at length enabled to see how the false and corrupt doctrines had from time to time crept in; and from their sound learning, firm faith, and high self-devotion, we have gained all that was done well in the Reformation. To the history of the Reformation their names belong; and also the names of the excellent archbishops BRADWARDINE and FITZRALPH, whose piety and zeal

[3] Her Funeral Sermon, by Bishop Fisher, and other memorials of this excellent person, have lately been collected and published by Mr. Hymers, fellow of St. John's, Cambridge. It is a volume worth the attention of the student of Church-history.

for truth raised them far above the spirit of their times; and that of JOHN DE THORESBY, archbishop of York, A.D. 1360, who was a diligent preacher himself, and commanded his people to come and hear preachers. He also promoted the reading of the Scriptures in English: "Hear God's law," he said, "taught in thy mother-tongue. For that is better than to hear many masses."

There were many, too, who did excellent service in building not only the splendid cathedral-churches which we see in every cathedral-city, and which were most of them built during this period, but also in rearing many of those handsome, and often very elegant, churches in country-villages. The successors of bishop Grostête, following his example in taking care of the country-parsons, reared several of those parish-churches which are to be found in Lincolnshire, a county full of well-built ornamental churches. And it would not be easy to find a character more befitting a Christian bishop than that of Richard Poore, the founder not only of the beautiful cathedral, but of the town of Salisbury.

RICHARD POORE, dean of Salisbury, was consecrated bishop of Chichester A.D. 1215, and of Salisbury in 1217. This prelate, by a bold and memorable effort, transferred his cathedral-church from Old Sarum, a situation on many accounts inconvenient, to the place where it is now situated. The old church was built by Herman, the first bishop who resided there; but as he left it scarcely complete, Osmund finished it. But the powerful bishop Roger so enlarged and beautified it, that he may be almost said to have built it new: and Malmsbury, who wrote at that period, reckons it among the most splendid churches in England. But Richard Poore, annoyed with the insolence of the garrison-soldiers of the neighbouring castle the want of water, and

the bitterness of the weather on a high, naked, and stony hill, advised both the townspeople and clergy to leave the situation, and make a new settlement, building a new town and church in a meadow-ground one mile distant, watered by a river, and called for its pleasantness by the name of Merry-field. To this place inviting the most celebrated workmen, who could any where be found, he laid the foundations of a church, which is at this day one of the most beautiful in England. Pandulpho, the legate, laid the first five stones, one for the pope, one for the king, the third for the earl of Salisbury, the fourth for the countess, and the fifth for the bishop. King Henry III. gave money towards the edifice; and the citizens of Old Sarum all shifting their abodes, there was nothing left in the old spot except the Norman castle.

Bishop Poore did not remain at Salisbury to finish the church; for after founding an hospital and a nunnery, he was translated to Durham. When he felt his end approaching, having assembled the people, he preached to them as usual, and told them that his death was at hand. Again, on the following day, his illness increasing, he preached another sermon, bidding his flock farewell, and asking pardon if he had offended any one. On the third day, having called together his household, especially the wards who had been entrusted to his care, he distributed to them what he thought reasonable, to each according to his services: and having thus deliberately disposed of every thing, and said a few words to each of his friends, late at night repeating the compline, or last evening service, when he came to the verse—*I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest,* the good bishop happily fell asleep in the Lord. Before his death he had paid a great debt, which was contracted by his predecessor.

The public favour toward the monasteries had greatly declined long before the time of their destruction. Some of the smaller ones had been broken up; and some few had been turned over with their lands to the endowment of colleges, the only societies in this country which now keep up a picture of old monastic life. Yet in the midst of the bloody wars of York and Lancaster, they were again the refuge of many of all ranks, and particularly of the weaker sex, who had seen their protectors slain or banished, and houses and lands torn from them. It is sad to think of the gross injustice and rapacity of the tyrant Henry VIII., displayed in their last overthrow. The worthy Latimer raised his honest testimony against it. He knew the prior of Great Malvern, in his own diocese of Worcester. "He is an old worthy man," he said to Cromwell, Henry's minister, "a good housekeeper, and one that hath daily fed many poor people. He only desires that his house may stand, not in monkery, but so as to be converted to preaching, study, and prayer. Alas, my good lord, shall we not see two or three in every shire changed to such a remedy?" He pleaded to a deaf ear. The destruction was total; and the following want of ministers and preachers was so great, that queen Elizabeth was obliged in some parts of the country to pay a number of clergymen a salary to do the duty in places, particularly Lancashire, where they could obtain no maintenance.

Still more remorseless was the destruction of nunneries, houses maintained at little expense, and for poor females, who could not have troubled the peace of a realm which was once separated from Rome. The writer has before him a copy taken from a book of devotion evidently drawn up for the use of a nunnery, in which are many of the prayers and meditations of RICHARD OF HAMPOLE, a pious

hermit, whose writings were highly prized by religious readers, and who did much to aid devotion, as a true lover of the cross of Christ, about the beginning of Edward III.'s reign. It contains, among other pious rules, the following "seven marks to know when the Spirit of God works in the soul:

"1. It makes a man or woman to set the world at nought, and all the worldly worships and vanities therein.

"2. It makes God dear to the soul, and all the delight of the flesh to wax cold.

"3. It inspires both delectation and joying in God.

"4. It stirs thee to the love of thy neighbour, and also to compassion of thine enemy.

"5. It inspires to all manner of chastity.

"6. It makes to trust in God in all tribulations, and to joy in them.

"7. It gives desire to will to be departed and to be with God, more than to have worldly prosperity."[4]

The poor maidens, serving God, and studying such a manual as this, were surely not leading such a life as some of their revilers have represented. But there are also testimonies from the very men who were sent on Henry's hardhearted errand, who were moved to pity by the sight of piety and suffering innocence, and in more instances than one endeavoured to save a few of these abodes, which were so doomed to cureless ruin. It is a remarkable letter which the visitors sent up in behalf of the nunnery at Catesby, Northamptonshire:

"The house of Catesby we found in very perfect order; the prioress a sure wise, discreet, and very religious woman, with nine nuns under her obedience, as religious and devout, and with as good

[4] Not a word has been altered in this paper: only the old spelling has been changed.

obedience as we have time past seen, or belike shall see. The said house standeth in such a quarter, much to the relief of the king's people and his grace's poor subjects, as by the report of divers worshipful near thereunto adjoining, as of all other, it is to us openly declared. Wherefore, if it should please the king's highness *to have any remorse*, that any religious house shall stand, we think his grace cannot appoint any house more meet to shew his most gracious charity and pity over than the said house of Catesby. As to their bounden duty towards the king's highness in these his affairs, also for discreet entertainment of us his commissioners and our company, we have not found, nor belike shall find any such. And lest peradventure there may be labour made to their detriment and other undoing, before knowledge should come to his highness and to you from us, it may therefore please you to signify unto his highness the effect of these our letters, to the intent his grace may stay the grant thereof, till such time we may ascertain you of our full certificate in that behalf."

This letter, signed by Edmund Knyghtley[5] and three others, tells us very plainly the scant measure of justice that was dealt to these poor women. The commissioners would have inclined the king to mercy if they could; but the cause was judged first and heard afterwards. The lands of the nunnery were granted away to persons who bid high enough for them, before the certificate of the state of religion and discipline was sent up.

The mischiefs which arose from this sudden injustice were great and multiplied. The nunneries were commonly ladies' schools, where young persons of

[5] Ancestor of the present Sir Charles Knightley, of Fawsley, Bart., M.P. for the county of Northampton; a family distinguished at that time for their zeal for the Reformation.

the richer and middle condition of life went to be educated; here was a little estate left for the maintenance of instructors; and charitable persons sometimes left them land or fee, expressly on condition that they should keep such schools, and teach needlework and embroidery, and how to work some of that fine old tapestry which may still be seen in seats of English noblemen and country-gentlemen's houses. And together with this they were religiously taught and brought up in the fear of God; for true piety was never banished in the worst of times from the breasts of English women. It is greatly to be desired that there should be still some such religious houses, where, without ensnaring and mistaken vows, persons might find an asylum from the disquiet of the world, and meet with society of that kind which would be the best suited to relieve them from the trials to which, in our railroad-making, money-getting age, they are often exposed, without the sympathy of a friend.[6]

We now conclude. The lesson to be learnt from all Church-history is a lesson of faith in the Author of all truth, the Founder and Preserver of that religion of which the Church is His appointed keeper and witness in the world. However the errors and crimes of men may have dimmed the pure light of the gospel in times past, as they do now; yet we may see in these records that the old Christian bishops and fathers of our native land lived and died in the same faith which we cherish; they founded or maintained a Church in doctrine and discipline the same as ours; they sought, by one Saviour's blood, an inheritance in the same heaven in which we hope to dwell. These pages will not have been written in

[6] An English lady has of late years founded such a house at Clifton near Bristol. It is to be wished that there were more of them.

vain, if they shall remind one Englishman, who reads the record of the trials and deliverances of his Church, to offer more solemnly his prayer of confidence in the almighty Protector: "O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us, the noble works which thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them;" and to entreat, that "his continual pity may still cleanse and defend his Church;" and "that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by his governance, that his Church may joyfully serve him in all godly quietness, through **Jesus Christ our Lord.**

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL.

APPENDIX:

CONTAINING COPIES OF THE LORD'S PRAYER IN THE TIMES OF THE EARLY ENGLISH CHURCH.

I. In the time of king Alfred. A.D. 890.

Fæder ure, thu the eart on heofenum,
Si thin nama gehalgod;
To-becume thin rice;
Gewurthe thin willa on eorthan, swa swa on heofenum.
Urne dæghwamlican hlaf syle us to-dæg.
And forgyf us ure gyltas, swa swa we forgifath urum gyltendum.
And ne gelædde thu us on costnunge;
Ac alys us of yfele. Sothlice.

The same, in our present way of writing and spelling:—

Father our, thou that art in heaven,
Be thy name hallowed;
Come thy kingdom (*rice*, rule; still added to some words, as bishop-ric);
Be done thy will in earth, so as in heaven.
Our daily loaf sell (give) us to-day.
And forgive us our guilts, so as we forgive our guiltyings (debtors).
And not lead thou us into cosening (deceit, or temptation);
But loose us from evil. Soothly (truly, or amen).

II. In metre, sent by Nicholas Breakspeare (pope Adrian IV.) into England, in the time of king Henry II. A.D. 1160.

Ure Fadyr in heaven-rich,[1]
Thy name be hallved everlich.[2]
Thou bring us thy michel blisse.
Als hit in heaven y-doe,[3]
Evar in yearth beene it also.
That holy bread that lasteth ay,
Thou send it ous this ilke day.[4]
Forgive us all that we have don,
As we forgivet uch[5] other mon.
Ne let ous fall into no founding,[6]
Ac shield ous fro the fowle thing.

III. Another, of Henry III.'s time, about A.D. 1250.

Fadir ur, that es in hevene,
Halud be thy name to neven :[7]
Thou do us thy rich rike :[8]
Thi will on erd[9] be wrought alike
As it is wrought in heven ay ;
Ur ilk-day brede give us to-day ;
Forgive thou all us dettes urs,
As we forgive till ur detturs ;
And ledde us in na fanding,[10]
But shuld[11] us fra ivel thing.

[1] the kingdom of heaven. [2] hallowed evermore.
[3] as it in heaven is done. [4] this same day.
[5] each. [6] confounding, confusion.
[7] hallowed be thy name in the naming. Thus the old English poet Chaucer, A.D. 1380—

" There saw I syt in other sees (seats)
Playing upon other sundry glees,
Which that I cannot *neven*
Mo than starres ben in heven."

[8] reach us thy kingdom ; put it within our reach. [9] earth.
[10] confounding ; as before. [11] shield, or defend.

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